LOITERER'S HARVEST

E. V. LUCAS

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LOITERER'S HARVEST

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LOITERER'S HARVEST

BY

E. V. LUCAS

AUTHOR OF "OVER BEMERTON'S," "MR. INGLESIDE"
"A LITTLE OF EVERYTHING," ETC.

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LOITERER'S HARVEST

Seen from the Line

AN ingenious friend, many of whose ideas I have from time to time borrowed or frankly stolen, projected once a series of guide-books, to be subsidised by railway companies, which were to bear the same title as this essay, and to enlarge upon the towns, villages, cathedrals, mansions, parks, and other objects of interest, glimpses of which could be obtained from carriage windows. Like too many of his schemes, it has as yet come to nothing; but I have often thought of it when travelling, and particularly when, as the train rushed through Redhill, I used to catch sight once or twice a week of the bleak white house among the trees on the slope immediately to the east of the station, because that house was built by a man of genius who has always attracted me, and who deliberately placed it there (and allowed no blinds in it) that he might have the pageant of the sunset over the weald of Surrey and Sussex before his eyes.

But there was another reason, of far greater importance and shiningly unique, for looking for this white

house among the hillside trees, and that is that it is a link between the very ordinary, matter-of-fact person whom I know as myself and the inspired mystic who wrote "Tiger, Tiger, burning bright" and "Jerusalem," and drew portraits of the prophets from his inner vision — none other than William Blake.

That there should be any other bond between us than my admiration of his genius will probably come as a surprise to most of my friends. But it is so, as I will explain; for the bleak white house on the hill is Redstone House, built by John Linnell the landscape painter in 1851; and among John Linnell's sons was William, the godson of William Blake, named William after him, who as a child was held in Blake's arms; and in 1880, when I was at school at Redhill, William Linnell was the drawing-master: a rather testy old gentleman with a very white beard, who was possessed of that curious sensitive antipathy to cats which informed him instantly if one was in hiding anywhere near.

Although no one who has ever seen my pencil at work would credit the statement, I was in a manner of speaking "taught drawing" by this elderly professor. During the period of his instruction the privilege was not valued; but now that he is dead and I am older, I look back upon it with pride and excitement, for the association, by bringing me so near the great visionary, gives me a caste almost apart. In however many ways I may approximate to the mass of mankind, I am aloofly superior to

them in this remarkable respect: I was taught to draw by one who had sat on the knee of the author and illustrator of the *Songs of Innocence*. Common persons have no idea how a thought such as this can invigorate and uplift.

John Linnell I never saw. He was still living in 1880; but he was enormously old, nearly ninety, and we heard terrifying things about him: of his patriarchal despotism in the house where this white-haired drawing-master who kept us so nervously busy with our india-rubber was treated still as a mere boy; of his alarming venerableness, resembling awe-inspiring figures in Blake's pictures; of his uncompromising austerities of life. As to how far these stories were true, I have no knowledge; but that is what we heard, and it was enough to keep us on half-holidays from Redstone wood. Of course I am sorry now. Could the chance come again — which are quite as sad words as those which stand at the head of "Maud Müller" — I should have many questions to ask him, chiefly of course of Blake, but also of that other curious character and even more intimate (because nearer earth) friend of Linnell, John Varley, the water-colour painter. For it was to Linnell that Varley, in the midst of a thicker crowd of misfortunes than ever — writs and imprisonment for debt and domestic embroilments — made the immortal remark which should have won him, under any decent dean, a niche of honour in Westminster Abbey with the words

in imperishable gold — "But all these troubles are necessary to me. If it were not for my troubles I should burst with joy." It would be good to hear at first hand more of the man who could say that.

Disappearing London

"GIVE me, ah! give me yesterday!" This bitter cry is on the lips of every lover of London, faintly heard amid the din made by the pickaxes of the demolishers and the cranes and trowels of the contractors. But the wish can never be granted; at the most we can by hunting for it cherish for a moment an illusion, and here and there, in the few sanctuaries of antiquity and beauty that remain, cheat ourselves that time has run back and the serener past again is ours. That such opportunities must speedily become fewer is of course in the very nature of things, decay being a law of life; while, as it happens, the rebuilder was never so urgent as now. The searcher for the vestiges of that sweeter and older London must therefore hasten — as I have just been doing — for it is astonishing how rapidly an old house can become a new one.

Venerable and respected landmarks disappear in a moment, like water into sand. Mushrooms cannot grow more quickly than a really beautiful

but insufficiently utilitarian London building can vanish. Let me give two examples that approximate to truth more closely than most things in the daily Press. I remember how when I first came to London and lodged in Golden Square I used to rejoice in the sight of a Georgian mansion opposite. One day I chanced to leave town for an hour or two, and when I returned the Georgian residence was brand new business premises. Again, I used occasionally at another time to buy tools and hardware necessaries at a seventeenth-century shop called Melhuish's, in Fetter Lane, with yellow walls and overhanging gables. One day I found that a purchase would not do and returned with it to change it, and behold, the seventeenth-century shop had become a modern commercial structure! Aladdin himself, with his lamp in hand, might yet take lessons in speed from London rebuilders; while in the matter of thoroughness, no earthquake can compare with the Duke of Bedford, as anyone may see by wandering at the back of the British Museum in the expectation of finding the Bloomsbury of yesteryear.

When one meets a London enthusiast, and peculiarly so if he is from the country, or from America (where London is revered as by few of her natives), one finds that the old London that most attracts him is in three divisions — Shakespeare's London, Johnson's and Goldsmith's London, and Dickens's London. I refer, of course, to semi- or

wholly-domestic relics rather than to public buildings: I mean, for example, that the pilgrim seeking Johnsonian London would prefer Bedford Row, say, which is unpreserved, to the house in Gough Square (although I thank the stars for that), which now is preserved, just as the lover of the country prefers an open heath to a park. In other words, one wants the old London that has survived by chance rather than the old London that has been cherished. One gets a truer thrill there. Not that I would disparage or appear to disparage the efforts of the preserver; but for the moment I am speaking purely of the feelings of the amateur of antiquity.

But it is not safe to postpone a visit, even to some of the cherished memorials. That wonderful row of timbered houses in Holborn, for example, which strike so strangely on the vision of the traveller who has entered London at St. Pancras or King's Cross, and is driving up the Gray's Inn Road — making him almost rub his eyes and wonder if he is not dreaming some such dream as fell to William Morris and is described in his memorable little *John Ball* apologue: that row is in pious hands, but it cannot last for ever. How should it? A day must come when it will no longer be considered safe: the County Council will debate upon it, and down it will come, not of course to be utterly lost, because for a certainty part at least of the façade would be re-erected at South Kensington, where they have a fine old London timbered façade

as it is; but the Tudor part of Staple Inn — the identical houses that Shakespeare often saw, and perhaps visited — must, although so jealously watched and restored and strengthened, assuredly at some not too distant day perish.

This means, of course, that still shorter life is to be predicted for another Shakespearean corner not far distant — Cloth Fair — since no wealthy insurance company is preserving that. Cloth Fair is the completest unprotected domestic relic of the Middle Ages that London possesses; and it has the additional merit of being genuine and not a show place. Many travellers enter the ancient church of St. Bartholomew and gaze, on their way in, at the backs of the houses above the graves; but they do not inquire farther. They do not examine the fronts of those houses, which are Nos. 6, 7, 8, and 9 of Cloth Fair; they do not walk a few steps up this mediæval street, which wants only its old signboards to make it exact again, and enter "Ye Old Dick Whittington" public-house — an inn which dates from the fifteenth century and has hardly been tampered with — where Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, visiting Bartholomew Fair together (as they must have done), undoubtedly took a glass. Nowhere in London is such a network of tiny courts as you find here, and some of the houses are still of wood. Ecclesiastical and civic buildings of great age are plentiful, but such domestic Tudor survivals are rare, and I hesitate to write of Cloth Fair at all, for fear that the rash

words may catch the eye of a municipal restoring and modernizing zealot.

Had it not been for the sight of a portfolio of delicate London drawings by Mr. P. Noel Boxer, I might never have seen Cloth Fair again: just through that postponing tendency which, although so natural, must be one of the bitterest things that dying men reflect upon. But they were so exciting as to send me straightway on a little tour of refreshment, beginning at that point. Directly I saw them, I said to myself I must see again those strongholds of ancientry, those beautiful, brave anachronisms. I said that in the morning, and gave the rest of the day to it, such terror one has of London's renovators, whether corporate or individual, County Council or British working man! Because one can't really trust anyone. Look, for example, at the gentleman in whose ingenious and altruistic brain originated the admirable (as I think) Daylight Saving Bill. One would expect in so thoughtful a philanthropist an especial reverence for such an abode of peace as Clifford's Inn, off Fleet Street. But you have only to go there — and you must be quick — to read on a notice-board that the Inn's purchaser is that same Mr. William Willett to whom the sun's rays are so dear, and it is he who is erecting on this sacred site commodious offices. So there you are!

That is why I lost no time in hurrying to Cloth Fair, and from there to Staple Inn, with its five delicate plane trees in brightest green (and, of

course, as you know, one of Staple Inn's peculiar glories is its forestry. In their haste people talk of Bushey Park as a place in which to revel in the beauty of trees: some even commend Burnham Beeches: whereas the truth is that only in the law inns and confined oases of this dark city of London in the months of May and June is the ecstasy of foliage really to be apprehended). Before I came to Staple Inn I had peeped into that Georgian backwater Bartlett's Buildings; after I left Staple Inn I crossed to Gray's Inn and drank in its great peace, and then took in the noble Georgian prospect of Bedford Row. Then I made for poor Clifford's Inn — what is left of it — and then for the Temple, and for what I think is its very jewel — Brick Court, where (at No. 2) Goldsmith lived and died, and after him lived Thackeray in the same rooms; and so down to the Temple Station, where I took train to Mark Lane, bent upon that part of Dickens's London in which he discovered Rogue Riderhood.

At some stairs below the Tower Bridge I found a waterman willing to pull me hither and thither for a few shillings. It was a warm afternoon in a wonderful May, and, except that I was in the midst of great beauty, I might, as I leaned back in as much comfort as was obtainable, have been on a Venetian canal. But I was not: the Thames warehouses are more than *palazzi*, and my waterman was interesting beyond any gondolier. He knew every inch of Wapping and Shadwell on the north bank, and

Rotherhithe on the south. He told me the names of all the Stairs and particulars concerning the landlords of all the inns. We passed between barges, avoided tugs, and rocked in the wash of steamers all the way to "The Prospect of Whitby" at Shadwell, which is an inn by the old entrance to the London Docks, between the Dock Master's little villa and Pelican Stairs. Why it is called "The Prospect of Whitby" was the only thing my waterman did not know about this inn, which has all the merits of its kind: an air of carelessness and ease not too far removed from decay; a balcony commanding the stream and all its strange ships and activity; and half a dozen indolent imbibers on view, to whom I appeared almost as a visitant from Mars. Add to this that half the house is wood, with an aversion from paint as deep as the habitués' aversion from water, and you have "The Prospect of Whitby" complete. But the thing to remember is that you won't have it long. The busybody is bound to discover it soon and talk pontifically of the danger of wooden structures in this vast and populous city (although I found some in Wellclose Square and some in the Borough High Street, where they are far more dangerous), and the death-blow will be sounded to this morsel of Whistlerian beauty, and the Thames will lose another Dickens relic.

Leaving reluctantly "The Prospect of Whitby," we crossed to the Rotherhithe bank, and rowed casually back towards the Tower Bridge (the best

gift of modern architecture to London); past hay barges all ready to the bland brush of Cotman, and one loaded with grain and deserted by its crew, on which half the pigeons of London had settled for the banquet of the season; past Rotherhithe Church, with little splashes of chestnut leaf in its churchyard shining between the warehouses; past other river-side inns and that fine row of insanitary and cheerfully broken-down buildings which ends with the "Angel," another tottering balconied hotel that commands the Pool of London and refreshes the Riderhoods of to-day. It was a brief voyage, for I still had certain other old London recollections to revive; but every second of it was crowded with interest.

And so I made my way to Tabard Street and the Borough, where the very crown was to be set on Dickens memories. For there the "George" was awaiting a visit. Now what "Ye Old Dick Whittington" in Cloth Fair does for the Shakespearean devotee the "George" in the Borough does for the lover of *Pickwick* and its creator. Dickens, of course, was a modern: he has been dead not fifty years; yet what we mean by the words "Dickens's London" is strangely enough more extinct than, for example, Goldsmith's London, although so much older. Goldsmith having the fortune to be associated with the Temple, his London can never wholly pass. Nor will the London that Dickens himself lived in and knew —

the London of the Bloomsbury squares and the Clubs — wholly pass for many centuries. But when we say "Dickens's London," we mean, of course, hospitable courtyarded inns and such riverside huddles of wharf, warehouse, shed, and balcony as I have been describing. And there is only one relic of a courtyarded inn left — the "George" — and that has been mercilessly reduced; although what remains is perfect. It is Dickens in essence. How any Dickensian visitor to London can possibly stay anywhere else is inconceivable, for here are the bedrooms opening on to balconies, exactly as on the day when Sam Weller was first discovered cleaning the boots of Mr. Alfred Jingle and Miss Rachel Wardle at the adjacent "White Hart"; here is the cosiest and brightest of bars, with a pair of pistols in it such as the guards of coaches carried, where you may still sip punch, a cordial beverage practically unknown in the rest of London and England, and very likely pineapple rum too.

What kind of life is in store for the "George" I cannot say; but since the painters were giving the beautiful balcony a new coat, its demolition (to make room for railway delivery wagons) cannot be instant. Still, as I said before, you must make haste, you who love old London, for everything is against you — Time and the elements are against you, and man and what he quaintly calls civilization and progress are against you.

Surprises

SANCHO PANZA, who was wise upon most things, and upon everything where wisdom is absolutely necessary, once remarked that it takes a long time to know anybody. A later sage has it that we know nothing about anybody at all. Both these pronouncements came to my mind the other morning when I discovered, after an acquaintance of some duration, that our veterinary surgeon had in his boyhood acted as one of the readers who were called in by that fastidious and exacting gentleman of genius, the late Edward FitzGerald, to regale him with Dickens's novels, an hour at a time, owing to the weakness of his eyes. But the veterinary surgeon, thus suddenly endowed with a glamour of which he had been only too innocent before, had nothing to tell. He was no Boswell. I asked a thousand questions; but he had no answers. He could not even remember what books he read; he knew only this, that he did not like Mr. FitzGerald.

But what I want to emphasize is the fact that if a million persons of intelligence (should there be so

many) were each to be shown my friend and asked to name one of his casual employments as a boy, not one would say, "He read Dickens to Edward FitzGerald." Not one.

Since then I have been looking at fellow-passengers in the train, not with more curious interest than of old, but with a new eye. Instead of conjecturing as to their walk of life on the basis of likelihood, I have speculated on a basis of improbability. "You look like a commercial traveller," I have said inwardly to a well-nourished *vis-à-vis* with several bulging bags and a big watch-chain; "you are therefore probably a Post-impressionist artist." Or, "Having all the stigmata of a horse-dealer" — this to another with a smooth, ferrety face, a short Wanghee cane, and riding-breeches, "you probably helped Swinburne with the proofs of *Bothwell*." For it is the unexpected that happens.

It is an open question whether it is more amusing to be surprised by the appearance of a person much thought about and at last met or to find one's anticipations realized. Certainly in the experience of every one there have been some rude shocks. Edmund Yates, in his Reminiscences, supplies one classical instance, when he records his meeting with Frank Smedley. Frank Smedley is not read now; but thirty and forty years ago he was the darling of schoolboys by reason of three novels which glorified strong men and daring spirits — *Frank Fairleigh*, *Lewis Arundel*, and *Harry Coverdale's Courtship*.

In these epics of lawless young English gentlemen in the early Victorian days muscle is very nearly all. Well, Yates went to see him, expecting a Hercules, and found a wizened cripple in a Bath chair.

The other classical example that comes to mind as I write is that of the detective who was sent over to France to arrest Wells, a defaulter become famous throughout the world as "the man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo." The arrest was made at a French watering-place, if I remember aright, the wanted man being pointed out to the detective by a foreign colleague. The detective's comment is historic. "What," he said, "that bleeding little tinker!" Poor Wells! and yet he had brought it on himself. It was, as the gentle Bully Smee remarks in *Peter Pan*, after all a bit of a compliment; for had he not broken the bank no very distinct conception of his appearance would have been formed. It was the contrast between that newspaper glamour and the man's insufficient inches which provoked the exclamation.

Conversely, I was not a little astonished, when I was introduced the other day to one of the quietest and demurest of modern essayists and philosophic teachers, to find myself in the presence of a giant who looked far more like a heavy dragoon than any manipulator of the pen. And again, sitting next a lady at dinner recently where another fairly well-known essayist was present, she asked me to point him out. "Immediately opposite you," I said, in-

dicating a clean-shaven face. "Oh," she exclaimed, "how funny! I always thought of him as having a pointed beard."

If I were the editor of an illustrated paper or magazine I would now and then collect a number of my readers' ideas as to the physiognomy of illustrious but unphotographed contributors and then tabulate them, with a true photograph at the end. The result would be at least as amusing as the pictures we now see of celebrities at different stages in their careers.

It is all to the good that insignificant-looking persons should do great things, but human nature will ever resent it. We are such determined idealists, we have such a passion for symmetry, that our first wish will always be that handsome does and handsome is shall be one.

Thackeray at the *Punch* Table

THE history of Thackeray's connexion with *Punch* is well known. He began to contribute in 1842, when he was thirty-one, the paper having been founded in 1841; he joined the staff at the end of 1843 and remained actively upon it for eight years, contributing, among other things, the *Snob* papers, many of the ballads (including that famous warm-hearted one in praise of the *Punch* Table itself, "The Mahogany Tree"), and a variety of other matter, even to satirical art criticism. He left the inner staff, owing to differences into which there is no need to enter here, in 1851, but continued to write occasionally until 1854. Yet although Thackeray ceased to write then, he did not sever his social connexion with the paper, frequently joining his old friends at the Table at the weekly dinner till within a few days of his premature death, and often either suggesting the cartoon or materially assisting it.

In 1858 a new recruit came to the paper in the person of Henry Silver, then a young lawyer of

thirty, to take the place left vacant by the death of Douglas Jerrold in 1857, and Silver kept a record of each dinner that he attended and the best things said there for twelve years, until, in 1870, he retired.

Silver died in 1910, leaving a seven-figure fortune, which the papers were so tactless as to describe as that of "a *Punch* contributor," but which, I need hardly say, did not represent his earnings as a comic journalist, and leaving also, to the proprietors of *Punch*, a large collection of original drawings by Leech, Tenniel, Keene, and others of the paper's artists, together with his Dinner Diary. It is this Diary which lies before me and yields the present crop of Thackerayana, which, if not of the highest value, has an interest inseparable from any words spoken by that shrewd and benignant great man at his ease among colleagues whom he trusted.

Before, however, we come to the Diary proper, it would be well to survey the staff in the year 1858, when Silver began to take notes. The editor was Mark Lemon, the corpulent and jovial, who had controlled it from the first number — July 17th, 1841 — and who must always be considered its father. At any rate — be the "onlie begetter" who it may, and there is a certain mystery surrounding the birth — it was Mark Lemon's personality which, more than anyone's, determined the personality of Mr. Punch, and is still potent. In 1858 Mark was forty-nine, with twelve years of life before him, and this Diary reveals him in a very pleasant light as a

simple, jocose, kindly, philanthropic, busy man of the world, and a very devoted husband and father. It is evident also that he had much tact. His contributions to the conversation are chiefly reminiscences of the earlier days of *Punch*, of the Stage, and so forth; but he says a few good and many sound and serious things, and occasionally brings stories of his children, as when he tells of one of his little girls replying to her sister who wished to keep her out of the drawing room, "Let me go in; I've as much parlour blood as you."

Next to Lemon in authority and resourcefulness was his deputy, Shirley Brooks, whom the Diary shows us to have been a less simple soul than Mark — very ready with anecdotes, puns, witty criticisms, improvised burlesques, and useful suggestions for cartoons, a *viveur* and a good deal of a cynic. Brooks was then forty-two, and had been on *Punch* only seven years. Like Lemon, he was a very versatile and industrious man and could turn his ready pen and astounding memory to anything. But neither was more than a journalist: nothing that they wrote lived after them. Shirley Brooks appears for the most part as a brilliant commentator, interjecting single remarks; but he has stories, too, a little sardonic or destructive as a rule, as when he tells of the Yankee who refused to allow his wife to bring their children to see him hanged. "What a shame!" she replied: "just like you — never letting them have any pleasure." Brooks had many

interests, and one week writes off to Augustus Egg, the artist, a suggestion for a picture: Dr. Johnson in his night rambles putting pennies in beggar-boys' hands as they lay asleep on doorsteps. If this was not worked upon, it should be.

Shirley Brooks was to succeed Mark as editor in 1870, and Tom Taylor was to succeed Shirley in 1874. Tom Taylor in 1858 was forty-one and had been on *Punch* since 1844. He was less nimble in fancy than Mark or Shirley, but was more solidly grounded than either, and not only was known by his dramas and adaptations, but had been Professor of English Literature in the London University and was art critic of the *Times*. He, like Lemon, is chiefly reminiscent and brings accounts of dinners he has attended and men he has met. But he has a few stories, one of which is of a child asking to be allowed to wear his drum while saying his prayers — if he promises not to think of it.

An older hand on the paper than Taylor was Horace Mayhew, brother of Henry Mayhew, who had been in at the birth with Mark Lemon, but was now living in Germany and devoting his time to the literature of philanthropy. In 1858 Horace was forty-two and had just come into money, which enabled him to take life easily and treat his *Punch* duties rather lightly. He was known as "Ponny" — supposed by Silver to be derived from Pony, Mayhew having acted as Mark Lemon's pony, or sub-editor, for some years. He could be argumentative and

provocative, but that was when he had dined particularly well. One of the neatest puns in the book is his. Percival Leigh had been to Southampton, where he played skittles in an alley decorated with portraits of the Muses. "The motto," said Mayhew, "should be 'Descend, ye Nine.'"

Percival Leigh, known as the "Professor," was trained for a doctor, and at Bart.'s had had as fellow-students Leech, Albert Smith, and Gilbert à Beckett, all on the staff of *Punch* in their time. Leigh joined the paper soon after it started in 1841. In 1858 he was forty-five, and he lived until 1889. The Diary makes him a rather precise if not dull, talker, and fond of serious discussion. Leigh and Leech were not only old friends, but they had collaborated, before *Punch* was started, on the *Comic English Grammar* and *The Children of the Nobility*.

Next, the two artists, for there were but two on the Table in 1858. Chief of these was John Leech, who, born in 1817, had been at Charterhouse with Thackeray (although much his junior). He joined *Punch* when it was three weeks old, and was its greatest draughtsman for many years. He was now forty-one, too near the end of his short life and beginning to be the victim of those street noises which accelerated that end. The Diary shows him to have been less genial and tolerant in conversation than with his pencil; but he was of the greatest use in discussing the cartoons, although it was urged

against him that his disapproval of suggestions was too drastic: a "juggernaut," Keene later called him. Leech's conversation is largely critical, but he has stories now and then, very much in the vein of his social jokes in the paper. One, for example, is of a little girl who was asked why she was so affectionate to her aunt, almost more so than to her mother, and replied, "Oh, mamma, of course I love you best, but then I must be civil to aunt because she spreads the jam."

Next to Leech, John Tenniel, the only member of the staff at that time who is still living. Sir John joined *Punch* in 1850, and left to pass into honourable retirement in 1900. He is now (1913) in his ninety-fourth year. The Diary records few of his remarks, but shows him to have made excellent suggestions for pictures. He and Leech hunted together a good deal.

The proprietors were William Bradbury, grandfather of one of the present heads of the firm, and Frederick, or "Pater," Evans, whose daughter married Charles Dickens the younger. There is no Evans in the business to-day.

As to Silver himself, he seems to have been a very modest, quietly observant young man, with a useful knack of writing whatever was wanted on the rather more substantial side — such as theatrical notices, and so forth. His chief contribution to the paper was a Comic History of Costume, illustrated by Tenniel.

Such, then, was the staff of *Punch* in 1858 when Silver's Diary begins; but it is with these men only in relation to Thackeray that we are concerned. The Diary records many amusing things said by them; but for the most part these are anecdotes, puns, and repeated jests. Able as they were, and, collectively, powerful as they were, each is dwarfed in the presence of Michael Angelo Titmarsh.

In 1858 Thackeray was forty-seven, and the author of *Vanity Fair*, *Pendennis*, *Esmond*, and *The Newcomes*. *The Virginians* was now appearing serially. He had still to become editor of the *Cornhill* and to write *The Adventures of Philip*. In the summer of 1858 the unfortunate quarrel with Edmund Yates had begun and was still in progress. Yates had written in a periodical an account of Thackeray which Thackeray thought not only unjust but too personal. Thackeray also thought that only by being a member of the same club (the Garrick) as himself could Yates have obtained some of his data, and he therefore demanded Yates's expulsion. Dickens took Yates's side and the *Punch* men naturally took Thackeray's; hence, to a large extent, the regrettable hostility to Dickens which continually appears in the Diary, but of which I say little or nothing. Rather does one remember, and again remember, what each man said of the other in moments of calm detachment, and particularly Thackeray's tribute to Boz: "I may quarrel with Mr. Dickens's art a thousand times; I delight and wonder at his genius; I recognise in it

— I speak with awe and reverence — a commission from that Divine Beneficence whose blessed task we know it will be one day to wipe every tear from every eye. Thankfully, I take my share of the feast of love and kindness which this gentle and generous and charitable soul has contributed to the happiness of the world. I take and enjoy my share, and say a Benediction for the meal." — The situation at the *Punch* Table was not made less difficult by the circumstances that Mark Lemon and Dickens had been close friends, and Evans was the father-in-law of Charles Dickens junior. Also that Bradbury & Evans, after having been Dickens's publishers, were just about starting a rival to *All the Year Round*, called *Once a Week*.

We meet Thackeray at the Table first on October 21st, 1858, the dinner being at the "Bedford" in Covent Garden; and he is at once kind to Silver and takes champagne with him. To have been at Charterhouse was a main road to the heart both of Thackeray and Leech. Thackeray "makes a cheese Devil to wind up with. Talks of Mackay [Charles Mackay, the song writer, now forgotten] and his liking for Kitawba wine; and says his poetry is like it — sparkling but not so creamy as Moore's champagne or so sound as Scott's claret. Brooks makes some references to the *Hoggarty Diamond*, whereat Thackeray challenges him to champagne and inquires after his health and family's. Thackeray says that Leech has the best beer and claret in London. Wishes for a cottage,

like Macready's, the walls hung with caricatures and cuts from *Punch:* there would he end his days."

On December 15th, 1858, it is discovered that an article in a preceding number, entitled "A Hall of Dazzling Light," describing Evans's Rooms under the name of "Bivins's," was by Charles Dickens junior, and is voted an imitation of Sala, and Thackeray describes Sala's style as "Dickens and water." The name of Sala, I may say, often crops up in these pages, and always leads to an argument as to how clever he is. One or two of the staff seem to have been a little envious of his gifts and success.

On December 22nd, 1858, we find a guest at the Table — Sir Joseph Paxton, the great gardener and builder of the Crystal Palace, who was always welcome. "Plain-spoken man," says Silver, "and drops an H occasionally; but clearly a clear head, and not a bit stuck up." Sir Joseph confesses to having drunk in his time "enough champagne to wine the road from St. Paul's to Hammersmith."

On January 19th, 1859, "Leech applauds the *Saturday Review* for cutting up Jerrold." Mark Lemon defends him, and in parting says to Silver, "I don't like to hear him ill-spoken of: he was always kind to young men and gave them a helping hand." Among the stories of Jerrold, a few of which are recalled whenever his name is mentioned at the Table, is his reply to some one who said that when Thackeray was in Rome they tried to make a Roman of him: "They should have begun with his nose."

It is needless to explain that Thackeray's nose was broken when he was at Charterhouse, but it is not so generally known that that is why he gave Titmarsh the Christian names of Michael Angelo, who also had this disfiguration. Thackeray and Jerrold seem not to have been on the best of terms. One reason given by Henry Silver is that the sight of Jerrold eating peas with a knife got on Thackeray's nerves.

Thackeray comes in again on January 26th, and at the Table receives and corrects a *Virginians* proof. He tells Silver it will inform him of the name of the head master at Charterhouse a hundred years ago — Dr. Crucius. Owns to having been flogged, and says it "hurt like hell."

On February 10th there is talk of books. Shirley wonders if reading books which one hasn't time to read on earth will form one of the joys of Paradise. Thackeray says that a man who produces cannot hope to read much. He then describes a German pianist guest of his who threw his best cigars on the fire, saying, "We pay duppence for a zigar like zis at Brussels."

On March 2nd Thackeray is present to eat a haunch of venison, but has to leave at nine to "go to a tea-fight at the Bishop of London's." Thus do the gods interfere. But before he goes he has the opportunity to "laugh consumedly" at a joke of Shirley Brooks which I cannot possibly print, and to make a few kindred ones himself, and to say to Silver,

"I went to Charterhouse the other day. Hadn't seen School come out since I left. I saw one little fellow with his hands behind him and a tear on his cheek and two little cronies with their arms round his neck, and I knew what had happened and how they'd take him away and make him show his cuts." (Mr. Spielmann, in his *History of Punch*, quotes nearly the whole of this entry: the only extract from the Diary that has previously been made.)

There is then a long interval, and the next dinner to be described is January 18th, 1860, when the news is brought that 80,000 of the first number of *Cornhill*, under Thackeray's editorship, have been sold.

On February 1st, 1860, Leech tells of treating his little girl to a shillingsworth of Punch and Judy. "Doorsteps and pavement instantly crammed. Where *do* the children come from?" Considering how Leech suffered from street-organs, this encouragement of the itinerant entertainers was very brave and good of him. He goes on to tell of the time when he was in a debtors' prison. He once saw "a few boys having a holiday — being taken to see a gentleman arrested." Percival Leigh sold lithographed caricatures for him. "Used to kiss female prisoners through the bars."

On February 8th, 1860, we have the début at the Table of Charles Keene. Keene was then forty-six, had drawn for *Punch* since 1851, and was destined to be a pillar of the paper for thirty-one years. Sir Joseph Paxton was present, and Mark Lemon, when

he asked him to champagne, was accused of "fawning on the aristocracy."

On February 15th Thackeray appears again, and the guest of the evening is the Rev. S. Reynolds Hole, afterwards Dean of Rochester, and a famous rose-grower. Thackeray had received £50 for a lecture at Liverpool, and put it into ten dozen of port. "Laid in 200 dozen of claret last year at £5." After dinner he goes first to the Geographical Society and then to Lord Cockburn's the Chief Justice.

On March 14th there is talk of Samuel Rogers. Leech calls him roundly a humbug, but Tom Taylor denies this. He tells of dining with Rogers and old Maltby — "*petit diner et pas d'erreuer* — 3 smelts for fish and all on that scale," and goes on to imitate Rogers' toothless voice saying, "I'm an old man and have a small voice; and if I don't say ill-natured things sometimes, I shouldn't be listened to." Relates that Rogers told Maltby that somebody actually asked if his name was Rogers. "Well, and wasn't it?" replied Maltby, obliviously repeating the offence. This, by the way, was William Maltby (1763–1854), the librarian of the London Institution for many years, and the lifelong friend of the banker-poet.

On April 11th, 1860, Thackeray, having got rid of No. 5 of the *Cornhill*, is thinking of running over to Paris for a day or so. "He gives *kudos* to *Gryll Grange* by Peacock. Written by a gentleman, he says. Adds later that he would like to have four

sheets a year to write and no more." Then, "he would write *such* letters to ladies." Thackeray writes a poetical inscription in *The Virginians* to Peter Rackham (a financial friend of Bradbury and Evans, who was present at the dinners now and then), but Silver gives only this: —

> . . . . . different opinions
> . . . . about *The Virginians.*
> Accept the book, dear friend, and if you find it
> Pleasant to read . . . I hope you'll bind it.

On October 16th Thackeray was not present, but there was talk of him. Taylor thought him the most miserable of men, mentally as well as from almost constant pain. Leigh likens him to Swift — "despises Vanity Fair [the place, not the book] and despises himself for taking pleasure in it." Lemon tells of Thackeray at a dinner given to Dickens when John Forster, with whom Thackeray was on very bad terms, said, "Here are our two greatest writers. One extracts good from evil, and the other finds evil in everything that's good." Thackeray, I may say, was subject for years to spasms which caused him both pain and anxiety.

On October 30th the staff discuss schoolboy ethics. Tom Taylor holds that every one has stolen when a boy. He himself stole his schoolmaster's apples. Leech is indignant and says, "God forbid my boy should steal." Taylor tells of Sala leaving lodgings at Erith suddenly after ordering a beef-steak pudding

for dinner and returning six months later with the remark, "Is that pudding boiled yet?"

On November 6th Thackeray is present again and quotes these lines as a sample of rhythmical ingenuity, but they cannot, I feel, be correctly given by Silver: —

> Let some intelligent officer be sent to the front;
> "Hardman, step forward," said Sir Hussey Vivien, K.C.B.,
> "and bear the battle's brunt."

In a conversation on the theme, Which great man of the past one would soonest meet? Brooks, Leigh, and Silver say Dr. Johnson, but Thackeray chooses Scott: "that dear old Sir Walter." He adds that Byron was a "raffish snob."

On November 20th Thackeray is troubled by a little coolness shown him by one of Dickens's children. "Let fathers hate each other like hell, but why need their children quarrel?" he says. He denies that it is natural for rival writers to be enemies. He calls Tennyson "the greatest man of the age: has thrown the quoit farthest." Brooks thereupon remarks that *Vanity Fair* ranks higher than anything of Tennyson's, and asks, "Would you change your reputation for his?" "Yes," says Thackeray; but is not believed. Scott as a poet then crops up and is praised for stirring the blood. "But," says Thackeray, "I don't want to have my blood stirred;" and afterwards, "Thank God that the world is wide and tastes are various, and what-

ever mental food be offered there are sure to be customers."

On December 4th Thackeray tells of his mother-in-law giving him claret *à six sous*, and now drinking wine of his at seven shillings a bottle. His daughters, too, are "terribly matured in their taste."

On December 11th he remarks to Leech, "How happy we were this day forty years ago, breaking up at Charterhouse!" Remembers Leech at six-and-a-half in his form: Master Bush just like him. Leech tells how he has been "coaling the waits" from his bedroom window, and says he would like £1000 and a country life. "Couldn't do it," says Thackeray. Dickens, some one says, made £10,000 by his readings in 1860. Thackeray says he made only half that altogether, and it is suggested that Leech should read publicly the lines under his drawings.

The following week — December 18th, 1861 — the prevailing topic is the death of Prince Albert. Some one says that Sala has received £100 from Smith & Elder for a trip to Genoa to make a *Cornhill* article, and Thackeray adds that it is for the "Genoa-wary number," which is a fair sample of many outrageous puns of his that I have omitted.

On January 8th, 1862, Shirley Brooks tells how he once danced with Grisi: "like waltzing with a whirlwind." Thackeray and Leech recall old Charterhouse songs.

On January 15th Leech describes Manning's

execution, which he saw, and tells of Calcraft the hangman saying of a hanging, "No, sir, I wasn't altogether pleased with it."

On January 29th Brooks tells of Rossini being summoned to Louis Napoleon's box and apologizing for his frock-coat. "No need of etiquette between sovereigns," was the reply.

On February 5th Silver is asked by Thackeray if he recognizes his daughter in the person of a pine-apple from Pernambuco — "Pinus Silvæ filia nobilis."

On February 19th there is talk of Bill Jerrold. "He writes well and looks well," says Thackeray. "But his plays have all been damned," says some one. "Yes, he's a damned clever fellow," says Thackeray: "Now I could never get a play damned."

On February 26th, 1862, Mark Lemon tells that he once dreamed a play, sprang up and sketched it, and got £100 and a violent cold. Keene says that he often dreams usable *Punch* jokes. "Thackeray tells of how he went to Bristol as a boy with his father the General, and his mother with her diamonds, and they went gorgeously to the play. And next time he went he was an actor himself, lecturing on the Georges." "Leech piteous in his complaints of the organ-men. 'Got up twice the other night to send them away. They're killing me. The only way to get sleep is to get into a train and give the guard half-a-crown to keep the door locked. Silver laughs and Tenniel laughs, but it's no joke indeed.'"

On March 5th Leech says something lenient about Mormonism. "Aha!" Thackeray replies, "I dine with you sometimes, and can tell your horrid thought. I'll be your haunting demon." Later Shirley quotes from *The Shabby Genteel Story* the saying that somebody spoke so satirically that nobody could understand him. "Bless you, Brooks!" says Thackeray.

The next week, March 12th, Thackeray brings news. He has left the *Cornhill*. Smith "a noble, generous fellow," says he, but wished to have a co-editor and not a sub. "Fact is, Thackeray doesn't do editor's work, which is to read and judge, not to write. . . . Thackeray has built his house, costing £5000, out of his two years' savings, nearly. Leigh tries to make him hark back — only a slight difference and might be adjusted. Thackeray says Lucas [editor of *Once a Week*] pitched into him for trying to get *Once a Week* artists to work for *Cornhill*. Keene refused. Thackeray thinks Free Trade is the right policy in literature and art. Man takes his work where he's best paid for it. Thackeray likes his *Lovel the Widower* and Smith doesn't. Acted it at Kensington the other night — his daughter Minnie good, and Morgan John O'C. as footman." Mark Lemon then discourses of editorship and says that Thackeray's name made *Cornhill*, but Thackeray says it was made by Trollope's serial, *Framley Parsonage*.

Later Thackeray says that John Forster cuts him,

but "he can't be savage, because it was Forster who brought Dr. Eliotson to him and saved his life." Envying Brooks his ready pen, Thackeray says it takes him "two days to think of a *Roundabout* and one day to write it. Writes best out of his house: anywhere except at home." Elsewhere Silver says that Thackeray writes *currente calamo* and hardly makes a correction. Dickens, on the contrary, almost rewrites with interlineations.

On April 9th Leech disapproves of Frith's "Derby Day." "Not a bit like life. Swell in black cloth trousers! Says a man should like horses to paint them."

On July 9th Thackeray has the staff to dine with him in his new house at Palace Green; Lucas, of *Once a Week*, and a nameless young man, a friend of the family, being also present. Thackeray's spoons are much admired, especially a Dutch one, with a chain on a leg, which he bought for £4 at The Hague, and saw one like it in the Strand marked £12. "Gilt foliated mirror frame, £30, very handsome," Silver records. "Queer old pictures — Dutch fighting piece — portraits, &c." Thackeray says they were all "made out of his inkstand"; and adds that when he married he and his wife looked at a house in Brunswick Square and found it too dear — £80.

On July 16th Lemon tells of a French duellist shooting a young Englishman after 1814. An Englishman in the green-room hearing the story goes out and returns in three days, saying, "I've

shot that Frenchman." Thackeray says he met the Englishman in Paris. (Silver queries if it were Captain Gronow.)

On September 18th Thackeray is "brimming with bad jokes," but none are quoted.

On September 24th Mark Lemon "talks of pawnbrokers dining together and pledging one another." The *Telegraph* has announced in its fashion columns that "Mr. Thackeray and Mr. Leech and the remainder of the Rothschild family" are at Folkestone, and this leads to much chaff.

On October 8th Thackeray says Mrs. Yates (*née* Elizabeth Brunton, the actress, and his enemy's mother) was his "boyish love." Talks of old farces, &c. Mark Lemon says that *Punch* was never so prosperous as now, in spite of the plagiary of "*Funch*," as Thackeray calls *Fun*. Keene thinks that Punch some day will be drawn with a nimbus — St. Punch.

On October 29th there is a discussion on life and its pleasures. Mark says that duties are worth living for. There is more happiness in helping others than in living for oneself. Brooks denies this. "Thackeray says that when he was on his death-bed (as he thought) he was perfectly content and happy. He is not deterred from wrong-doing by fear of a future state, but by feelings of present disgrace and dishonour." Later Thackeray "tells how Forster was annoyed by his hit at him in *Esmond* as 'Mr. Addison's man,' Dickens being Mr. Addison."

On November 26th Thackeray says "he feels a

sort of στοργή [natural affection] when he reads his daughter's [now Lady Ritchie] *Story of Elizabeth*. She has all my better parts and none of my worse." Brooks admires her pure English and likens her to Minerva from the brain of Jupiter. Thackeray says his feeling is shared by his mother, who says she can't read his books — "As many others do," he adds. Leech sleeps at his new house at Kensington for the first time to-night. (6 The Terrace, Kensington, which Silver afterwards took. It is now shops.) After he has gone, Thackeray "writes the Lord's Prayer in the size of a threepenny-bit, drawing the crown and 3 in centre, and gives it to Mark Lemon with lines round it: —

> Dear friend, I've writ this little page
> When one and fifty is my age, & etc.

In walking away, I talk of reading John Wilson's *Life* (Christopher North) and admire his manliness in turning to work when he lost all his fortune: also his thrashing the tinker, &c. Thackeray dissents. Says John Wilson did nothing worth record and the effect of the *Life* on him [Thackeray] was to make him tell his daughters, 'Mind, no biography' — of himself."

On April 1st, 1863, Thackeray says he writes when he sits down to write; as soon as he gets his nose to the desk his ideas come. Later he defends Colenso and denies the Creation in six days. But on this point, as we shall see, he changed his views. "Jonah and sun standing still he views as fables."

On April 15th Leech tells of his rushing out of

bed to silence what he thought were Volunteers who were playing in a public-house near by. "We're Foresters, sir," said one. "Then why the devil don't you go and play in a forest?" Leech asked.

On May 27th, 1863, Thackeray says that he once told his daughters that he wished they'd take the Bear at Esher for a home. Breakfasting at Gladstone's recently, he met an American lawyer and thanked him for a Press which had warned him to change his investments.

It was on June 17th, 1863, that Sir Francis Burnand ate his first dinner as a member of the *Punch* staff, on which he was to remain so long, succeeding Tom Taylor as editor in 1880. Thackeray was not present: but on June 24th he was, and very full of suggestions for a cartoon about sweating in dressmaker's workrooms. Said that to avoid any such result his daughters always ordered their dresses a month in advance.

On July 22nd, 1863, the staff are again Thackeray's guests at Palace Green. In addition to Thackeray, there is a barrister cousin from Canada named Beacher, and a Southern American named De Leon, who had described blockade-running in *Cornhill;* but nothing much is recorded of the evening, except that there was turtle soup, turbot, curried lobster, venison pie, cold beef, jelly bloaters, and ice cream after cheese. Thackeray confessed to a fear of burglary and American share confiscations, and was demanding £100 for each *Roundabout* in consequence.

On August 12th "the old Yates row crops up, and Thackeray fires at Horace Mayhew and says, 'Damn it, you fellows still seem to think it was because of his attack on my nose that I fell foul of him. I don't care a damn for my nose. He imputed dishonourable conduct to me, and for *that* I got him kicked out of the Garrick.' 'With your strength you might have been more generous,' says Horace, and Thackeray blazes up and finally bolts."

On December 2nd Thackeray chaffs Mark Lemon about a mistake in his novel *Wait for the End*, when he makes term-time at Cambridge in September. Lemon tells them that "Weaver" in the novel is Webster the actor, and "Stella" is Mrs. Mellon. Says Mrs. Mellon often used to come to him and say, "'I think So-and-So should have those lines to say: they'll be more effective so than if I say them.' Never knew any other actor to do this. 'Rupert Melville' he meant for Edmund Kean, who used to attend 'The Harp' by Drury Lane and stand 20 glasses of grog to poorer actors, many of whom drank themselves to death." Later the Table falls again upon a Colenso discussion, Thackeray contending for the six days as stated by the actual Word of God.

. On December 9th Thackeray is late, as he "could not resist the tripe at the Reform Club." A week later he is present again, but for the last time, and "pitches into Mayhew because his [Thackeray's] two guineas to the Julian Patch subscription is

entered as coming from Arthur Pendennis. Says he particularly begged that his name might not appear: 'They'll be at me again, those damned penny-a-liners.' Horace explains, and says the case is really a deserving one. 'Very well, then, I'll give you a fiver besides, in my own name,' says Thackeray. Tells also of one or two fellows who have extracted fivers and tenners from him at his house and at his clubs and in the streets and in the Parks. In fact, his purse is never safe." Again Colenso breaks in. Thackeray says, "We have God's own word (in His commandments) that He made the world in six days, and yet geologists tell us it took millions of years to make. *Quién sabe?*" and these are his last recorded words at the *Punch* Table.

Thackeray died on Christmas Eve, 1863, and Mayhew brought the news late in the evening, and, according to the late Frederick Greenwood, all joined in singing "The Mahogany Tree." The effect must have been overwhelming: —

Here let us sport,
Boys, as we sit;
Laughter and wit
Flashing so free.
Life is but short —
When we are gone,
Let them sing on
Round the old tree.

Mayhew led the song. I cannot conceive how he ever got through.

Evenings we knew
Happy as this;
Faces we miss,
Pleasant to see.
Kind hearts and true,
Gentle and just,
Peace to your dust!
We sing round the tree.

The week following, the day of the funeral, there was no Dinner. Silver says, "I never felt a loss so much, except, of course, those of my relations. And yet I was not privileged to rank myself as more than a casual acquaintance. But his kindliness extended to the smallest of his visitors, and he never snubbed one or ignored their presence. What the loss must be to his old chum and schoolfellow Leech, who can pretend to estimate? . . . The loss is a national one, but the nation cannot judge how his family and his friends feel it."

On January 12th, 1864, "Leech says, 'Thank God we shan't have to go round with the hat: his daughters will have £1000 a year between them.' Says he can't sleep without dreaming of poor Thackeray — been sleeping alone, so disturbed is he."

Leech survived his friend only a few months, dying on October 29th, 1864, aged only forty-six. Both lie at Kensal Green, and Shirley Brooks was buried near them.

On November 7th Leech's successor, George Du Maurier, took his seat at the Table; and so the world goes on.

A London Symposium

WE were talking about London. It is a good subject.

"What is the prettiest sight in London?" some one had asked; and we were discussing it, each naming his choice.

"The prettiest sight in London?" I said. "Why, a string of hay barges being towed up the river by a tug at six o'clock on a fine afternoon. Seen from the Embankment somewhere about Cleopatra's Needle, or from Westminster Bridge looking east."

They agreed that that was a good sight, and we passed on to the next opinion. This was the lady's in the grey hat. "The most beautiful sight in London in summer," she said, "is the sky above the Court of Honour at the White City just after the lamps are lit. It is the deepest, richest, intensest blue you ever dreamed of. There are many lovely intense blues – the blue of the peacock, the blue of the kingfisher, the blue of a Persian tile, the blue of a Rhodian plate – but this is the most wonderful of all."

We agreed again; but an objection was lodged by

the author of the debate. "Not a beautiful sight," he said, "but a pretty sight is what we want. You fly too high. London is so full of beauty that we must discuss that later. Just now we are after pretty things only. Next, please."

The journalist came next. "To me," he said, "there is nothing prettier than the pigeons at the Museum soaring round and embarrassing a little girl with a bag of corn — especially if you see them as you go in, with the darkness of the portico for a background. That is pretty, if you like. And then some one will startle them, and they will fly up to the roof, blue grey and white grey against black and grey, and mere prettiness goes and beauty is achieved. The distinction is illustrated there in perfection, I think."

"If it comes to birds," said his neighbour, "surely the gulls at Blackfriars Bridge are even more beautiful. Their movements are freer, their wings are broader; they suggest the open sea. And yet here they are in London in their hundreds waiting to be fed, just as if they were sparrows on a frozen lawn in winter."

"Oh, but what about the little red cottage among the rushes at the Horse Guards' end of St. James's Park?" said the lady in the black hat. "It is like a toy, and the ducks and moorhens and coots and terns swim about in the water beneath it, while the guinea-fowls and pelicans and storks promenade on the banks. That's most awfully pretty always."

The lady in the purple hat, who sat next to her, murmured approval. "Yes," she said, "I have often watched them. But my vote for the prettiest sight would, I think, go to the little mothers in the parks — Kensington Gardens, say — all so busy with their families — so grubby and so slangy and yet so responsible and masterful. I see them every fine day, and they always delight me. It is funny that little girls should so naturally suggest mothers, while little boys never suggest fathers. Yet so it is."

There was some talk as to whether the lady in the purple hat had described prettiness so much as an interesting spectacle; but, after all, it depends (as she said) very much on how you use words.

"Well," said her neighbour, "I believe I can beat that. You vote for the little girls; my vote shall go to the little boys. Do you know that this summer, on a hot week-day afternoon, I went all the way to Victoria Park in the East End just to see the bathers there? It's a shallow lake, a hundred yards long, and I swear to you that there were a thousand little East End boys in it at once — all naked and glowing in the sun, and all so jolly. I never saw so many naked boys before. It was 'the colour of life' in intensest movement. I thought of Blake's line, 'thousands of little boys and girls waving their innocent hands'; but these were flashing their innocent limbs. It is not only my prettiest London sight but the most cheerful."

This contribution completing the list, we waited for the author of the discussion to name his choice and end it. "Well," we asked, "and what *is* the prettiest sight in London?"

"The pony-carts," he answered. "The little pony-carts that crop up mysteriously among the wagons and taxis and motor-buses in Piccadilly and the Strand, even in Cheapside, and trot along so bravely and undismayed, and take their place so naturally in these untoward surroundings, and disappear as suddenly as they came. I always stand to watch them — the plucky little things, with their absurd little four brisk legs, and their four merry little hoofs, and their two ridiculous wheels. They are to me the prettiest sight in London."

Personally I think the Victoria Park bathers won it.

Insulence

THAT word at the head is spelled correctly. I wrote it with the greatest care. It is an invention of my own, a blend of "insular" and "insolence," and it was coined to describe that habit and carriage of an Englishman abroad which are found so objectionable by Continentals who have not our island heritage of security and liberty; and I have been thinking about it because I suddenly ran into two perfect examples of insulence the other day, here, at home, in an English country district, and realized then, in a flash, how the Frenchman feels, and why. For the moment, indeed, I was a Frenchman, and these were invaders from a dominant race who have no conscription to make all men equal. Personally I hate the idea of conscription, but I think I can understand how it feels to be one of a conscripted people and watch the unimaginative and complacent antics of visitors from a nation of cricketers ruled by a Cabinet of golf-players, as one of our most caustic critics has put it.

As a matter of fact, it was from two golfers that I gained my insight into insulence.

The Royal and Ancient

Why does golf make some men so intolerable? Not all, of course, but too many. Why is it that one would rather walk home than sit in a railway compartment amid a certain type of golfer? Racing men can be coarse enough: but they do seem to belong to the human family. Cricketers can be boring enough, with their slang and their records; but they, too, are men. Footballers can be noisy and rowdy enough; but there is a basis of geniality under all. Lawn-tennis players can be frivolous enough; yet one knows that they mean well. But these golfers? What is there about golf to so lift a man's nose, and curl his lip, and steel his manners, and doom him to dwell in the wilderness of superiority?

I have thought about this problem a good deal, and have hazarded scores of conjectures. Can it be that he has a suspicion? Can he feel that this discreet and pedestrian pastime, at any rate for a young and active man, is a little bit foolish? Can he wonder sometimes if a man who carries such a quiverful of clubs with which to urge so small and white a ball over suburban fields is not an object of laughter? Does he ever speculate whether he ought not to be doing something else? Can he entertain a doubt that a game may be wrong when it involves the employment of a boy to carry one's implements and is played by so many couples at once, each in a sea of green enisled, passing like ships in the night? It may have occurred to him, very possibly, that the true root-idea of a game in

the open air is a communistic striving at high pressure, and that possibly the almost episcopalian discretion and selectness of golf are a mistake and a rather foolish one.

I am not bringing these charges against golf. I am merely speculating on the causes of the insulence of insulent golfers. I am trying to find some reason for the conversion by this game of quiet, nice, modest men into monsters of metallic aloofness and self-esteem. Aware of the game's pettinesses, is it that they are forced into unnatural crustaceousness and complacency as a defence?

Or perhaps they may be overburdened by the consciousness of their legs? For this game, which involves only a stationary ball and calls for no running — nothing more than such a sober and dignified gait as an undertaker might indulge in, or a Bath-chair man — yet demands knickerbockers and stockings. Perhaps some men's calves are too much for them. They were for Sir Willoughby Patterne, the champion egoist, who would surely have played golf superbly. I am inclined rather to favour this calves theory because I have often found golfers to be quite social, kindly creatures in their ordinary clothes, when not bent upon their sport. Released, indeed, from its dominion, they can be as other men. But once they come again under its power, instantly their naturalness disappears, and the iron (and often the brassie) enters into their soul.

Or it may be that the golfer is overcome by the

age and honourable traditions of his game. It may even be that he took to it because of a certain aristocratic aroma that clings to it, and, fearful of being thought an intruder, he too adopts the classic restraint and disdain of Vere de Vere — as he imagines it. Here and there the village people whose common has been converted into a links by the neighbouring gentry are allowed also to play, when the light is getting poor, and are encouraged by a cup or medal (I have a case in mind where the common is not safe to walk over any longer); but for the most part golf remains exclusive: a kind of open-air extension of club-life. Perhaps it is this high-handed confiscation of commons that is preying on the golfer's mind, and he has added a veneer of moral confidence and self-approval to conceal the subsidence of conscious virtue within.

Or is it that the game is too much for him all round? As some horses cannot stand oats, so some men cannot stand golf. Again I am only speculating, and speculating, probably, very idly. But it is an interesting study, the anti-social demeanour of the insulent golfer, even if one observes it for no other purpose than to try to be more at one with the critical Continental.

Yet even I, who write these words, perhaps have the appearance of a golfer when I am abroad.

A Good Poet

THIS is frankly a eulogy. For that is the only way to deal with poetry: either leave it alone or be enthusiastic about it. It is also an expression of thanks, for many of Mr. Chalmers's lines have been running in my head this last fortnight, an undercurrent of melody amid all London's cacophonies, and since every lyric in his little book[1] gives me pleasure, I want to state my gratitude to him for the new music and new fancy and new grace which he has brought into a world the visible delights of which he is tireless in extolling.

England was never richer than now in writers of light verse, many of them of astonishing technical excellence, and most of them urbanely witty to a point that fills an ordinary person with despair; but Mr. Chalmers, while equal to any in deft dexterity, is different. He is less of the school of Seaman than of Dobson; indeed, he has been reviving in me sensations of satisfaction such as I have not felt since *Old-World Idylls* (which, with Abbey's

[1] *Green Days and Blue Days.* By Patrick R. Chalmers. Maunsel & Co., Dublin. 3s. 6d.

frontispiece and its perfect title-page, and Alfred Parsons's tailpiece, I shall always consider the best-published book of our time) made life so much better in 1883. There is nothing derivative about Mr. Chalmers; it is merely that his view of things is not unlike Mr. Dobson's. He, too, has the lightest of touches, the urbanest of smiles, a memory stored with classical lore, a tender heart, and the gentlest sophisticated humour; where he differs chiefly from Mr. Dobson is in his love of the open air. Mr. Dobson, I feel sure, has shot no partridge, stalked no deer, killed no salmon; Mr. Chalmers rejoices in sport.

Mr. Chalmers does as a poet what I as a critic should like to do — he writes only of such things as please him. He spins little fantasies about old china and Oriental figures; he revels luxuriously in memories of fishing days; he lets his thoughts wander to the river bank on summer nights; he tilts wittily and wisely at the things that do not matter; he commemorates the virtues of his dogs; he glorifies flowers and butterflies; and now and then he crystallizes his experience in some ingenious apologue. Now and then, too, he has eyes and a phrase for a pretty girl. And it is all done so musically and so engagingly, and yet with a certain seriousness as well, which is, I think, the reason that he makes such an appeal. One knows that he feels what he writes. It all comes from within.

Let me borrow gaiety and distinction and charm for my pages by quoting two or three examples.

5

This "Contrast" shows Mr. Chalmers at his most ingenious and most cultured. It is almost an indoor poem, not quite. Nothing can keep Mr. Chalmers indoors for long, and there is his strength and, as I have said, his chief difference from Mr. Dobson, who has never wandered farther than to the sundial, bless him! Has not this grace and movement? —

A CLASSICAL CONTRAST

I have (in bronze) a tiny
  Adventuress of Greece,
A little laughing Phryne,
  Upon my mantelpiece,
And when I see her smiling
  Imagination strays
Once more in brave, beguiling,
  Divine Athenian days!

Cool marble courts are ringing
  As merry voices call,
Where girls are garland-stringing
  For Springtime's festival;
In lanes of linkéd lightness
  The roses rope, and flow
Blood-red upon the whiteness
  Of chiselled Parian snow!

I have a pot of pewter,
  And when the firelight gleams
It too will turn transmuter
  Of commonplace to dreams.
Then, though the year's at ember
  Once more high June doth reign
And I in dreams remember, —
  And win the thing again!

"To a Chalk-Blue"

On turf of headland thymy,
  Where brine-washed breezes strive,
I lay the subtle stymie,
  I drive the spanking drive;
I see the grey tides sleeping,
  I watch the grey gulls wheel,
Till through the dusk come creeping
  The lights of distant Deal!

O pewter and O Phryne,
  Since both of you may bring
Your visions blue and briny
  Or garlanded of Spring:
I welcome you together
  Upon my mantelpiece,
And love both magics, whether
  Of England or of Greece!

As an example of Mr. Chalmers's happiness of touch and joy of life in his Nature-poems take these lines "To a Chalk-Blue": —

Butterflies, Butterflies, delicate downy ones,
Golden, and purple, and yellow browny ones,
Whites, reds, and tortoiseshells, what's in a hue?
You're worth the whole lot of them, little Chalk-Blue!

Fabled Apollos, of bug-hunters' hollow tales,
Camberwell Beauties, Large Coppers, and Swallow-tails,
They've fled from high farming, they've gone down the
  breeze,
To Elfland, perhaps, or wherever you please.

You, Master Blue, hold by man and his handiworks,
Chalk-pits and cuttings, and engineers' sandy works,
Sway on his wheat-stalks, most buoyant and bold,
A turquoise a-droop on a chain of light gold!

Here was your home, ere the Legion's lean warriors
Laughed at the slings of Druidical quarriers,
Or ever the Eagles came swooping ashore,
You flew your blue ensign from Lizard to Nore!

Long may you linger and flourish exceedingly,
Dancing the sun round all summer unheedingly.
Sprite of his splendour, small priest of high noon,
Oh, bold little, old little blue bit of June!

Could that particular butterfly have been more appropriately celebrated? Do not the verses almost suggest its flight and hue?

You notice Mr. Chalmers's pretty use of the word "little." How many times he uses "little" in this volume I have not counted to see, but he knows its value better than most. There is an ode to Syrinx, "Little Lady loved of Pan"; there is a gossamer of speculation as to the identity of the heroine of a gardener's legend: —

I like to fancy most
That she is just some little lady's ghost
Who loved her flowers
And quiet hours
In Junes of old;

there is a panegyric on "a little hound of Beelzebub"; and so forth — all made the more attractive by this employment of an affectionate diminutive. And there is this charming suburban lyric: —

Little garden gods,
You of good bestowing,
You of kindly showing
Mid the pottings and the pods,

Watchers of geranium beds,
Pinks and stocks and suchlike orders,
Rose, and sleepy poppy-heads —
Bless us in our borders,
Little garden gods!

Little garden gods,
Bless the time of sowing,
Watering, and growing;
Lastly, when our sunflower nods,
And our rambler's red array
Waits the honey-bee her labours,
Bless our garden that it may
Beat our next-door neighbour's,
Little garden gods!

Finally, here is a specimen of Mr. Chalmers in a more serious moment, where he handles a pathetic theme like a gentleman: —

If I had a broomstick, and knew how to ride it,
I'd fly through the windows when Jane goes to tea,
And over the tops of the chimneys I'd guide it,
To lands where no children are cripples like me;
I'd run on the rocks with the crabs and the sea,
Where soft red anemones close when you touch;
If I had a broomstick, and knew how to ride it,
If I had a broomstick — instead of a crutch!

And here (for there is a limit to the decent eking out of one's own copper with other men's gold) I stop: whole-heartedly commending this kindly, happy, and distinguished spirit to you.

Much of the above I wrote and printed during the winter of 1912, just after Mr. Chalmers's book

was published. The article when it appeared was read by a very literary gent of my acquaintance, a pundit famous throughout our Sphere for his critical judgments, who at once favoured me with a letter stating that he had looked into *Green Days and Blue Days* and found it good, but not poetry. "Some day," he added, "I will send you a definition of poetry." That day has not yet dawned; and I wonder how I can wait for it. But meanwhile let me say again that in my opinion the question of what is poetry can be answered only by each reader for himself. No definition framed by another is of the slightest use, except to embarrass young people at examinations and provide instructors with the dry formulæ by which they live.

"Poetry," said a famous literary theorist the other day, "is that which is written by a poet." He said it as a joke, but it is far more to the point than "the best words in the best order," and other of the classical phrases. My own definition would be, "Poetry is what I cannot write myself"; but for more universal application, this perhaps is better: "Poetry is that which any reader finds poetical," for that sets the burden on individual backs, where it ought to be. Judged by this test, Mr. Chalmers is for me a very good poet indeed, and, like Mr. Dobson and Andrew Lang and Moira O'Neill, as good a poet as anyone under ordinary conditions ought to want; for he touches the matters of daily life with radiance, and hangs a veil of romance over experience, and sends

you away happy. No doubt there are poets who have done more than this, and in rare moods one craves their society; but Mr. Chalmers and those three others are more daily friends. Meanwhile that definition is still to arrive!

Wordsworth *Pour Rire*

A NEW Wordsworth letter, dated November 17th, 1844, printed recently, protesting against the projected railway through the Vale of Windermere, would seem to have been called forth by a footnote to the poet's sonnet of October in the same year beginning —

Is, then, no nook of English ground secure?

The footnote ran thus: —

The degree and kind of attachment which many of the yeomanry feel to their small inheritances can scarcely be overrated. Near the house of one of them stands a magnificent tree, which a neighbour of the owner advised him to fell for profit's sake. "Fell it!" exclaimed the yeoman; "I had rather fall on my knees and worship it." It happens, I believe, that the intended railway would pass through this little property, and I hope that an apology for the answer will not be thought necessary by one who enters into the strength of the feeling.

In the new letter Wordsworth adds that this tree's owner, Mr. William Birkett, "furious at the thought of the railway going through his property," is prepared to give £1000 to prevent the line.

But let us inquire a little deeper. Of Words-

worth's four railway sonnets, the "Proud were ye, Mountains" is the best known: —

> Proud were ye, Mountains, when, in times of old,
> Your patriot sons, to stem invasive war,
> Intrenched your brows; ye gloried in each scar:
> Now, for your shame, a Power, the Thirst of Gold,
> That rules o'er Britain like a baneful star,
> Wills that your peace, your beauty, shall be sold.

That was in 1844. Yet see how the poet had written to Charles Lloyd, the Birmingham banker, in 1825: —

"To come to the point at once, I have been led to consider Birmingham as the point from which the railway companies now forming receive their principal impulse, and I feel disposed to risk a sum — not more than £500 — in purchasing shares in some promising company or companies. I do not wish to involve you in the responsibility of *advising* an investment of this kind, but I hope I do not presume too much when I request that you would have the kindness to point out to me what companies are thought the most eligible, adding directions as to the mode of proceeding in case I determine upon purchasing."

The late J. K. S., it will be remembered, desiring once again to parody Wordsworth, took the railway theme and (knowing nothing of the above letter) produced his piquant lines on "The Insufficiency of Steam Locomotion in the Lake District," of which here are two stanzas: —

Bright Summer spreads his various hue
  O'er nestling vales and mountains steep,
Glad birds are singing in the blue,
  In joyous chorus bleat the sheep.
But men are walking to and fro,
  Are riding, driving, far and near,
And nobody as yet can go
  By train to Buttermere.

Wake, England, wake! 'tis now the hour
  To sweep away this black disgrace —
The want of locomotive power
  In so enjoyable a place.
Nature has done her part, and why
  Is mightier man in his to fail?
I want to hear the porters cry:
  "Change here for Ennerdale!"

One does not draw attention to the inconsistency of Rydal Mount from any petty motive, but merely as an illustration of how pleasantly vulnerable our greatest may be. Wordsworth, also, it might be held, owes us a laugh now and then. In his lifetime he pleaded guilty to only one conscious joke, and when a man of advanced age who so understood his lowlier neighbours does that, we must find jokes for him. His joke, by the way, was this. He had been walking, he said, when a carter stopped him with the question, "Have you seen my wife?" And what was the poet's gravity-removing reply? "My dear sir," he answered, "I did not even know that you had a wife." That is not exactly in the acceptable manner of George Graves; but it will do. Providence, however, came in and made it better;

for the American critic, William Winter, when a small boy, was taken to Rydal by his father on a devout pilgrimage to the Mount. While the elders sat in the garden, the little Winter was sent out to the poet with a message. "Please, sir," said he to the author of "The Excursion," "your wife wants you." "You shouldn't say 'your wife,'" replied the poet reprovingly; "you should say 'Mrs. Wordsworth.'" "But she *is* your wife, isn't she?" was the answer of astonished Young America.

And now for the very cream of Wordsworth's career as a humorist, which has been sent to me by that inspired investigator of out-of-the-way printed matter, Mr. Bertram Dobell. It consists of a short article from the *Illustrated London News* of February 10th, 1855, and if anyone can read it aloud without collapse I envy his self-control. The conscious funny man never wrote anything that to my mind is droller. It runs thus: —

"Our notice last week of the sister of William Wordsworth has afforded us an opportunity of hearing from the lips of a true poet an account of a visit which he made to Wordsworth. His story is in every way characteristic of the great author of 'The Excursion'; and we have our friend's permission to tell it, but are not at liberty to mention his name: —

"In the summer of 1846, when on a visit to the Lake District, I called upon Mr. Wordsworth, to convey a message from his daughter, then in London.

He received me with a kindly shake of the hand. 'I am told,' said he, 'that you write poetry; but I never read a line of your compositions, and I don't intend.' I suppose I must have looked surprised, for he added, before I could find time to reply, 'You must not think me rude in this, for I never read anybody's poetry but my own, and haven't done so for five-and-twenty years.' Doubtless I smiled. 'You may think this is vanity, but it is not; for I only read my own poetry to correct its faults, and make it as good as I can.'

"I endeavoured to change the subject by some general remarks on the beauty of the scenery visible from his garden, in which our interview had taken place. 'What is the name of that mountain?' I inquired. 'God bless me,' he said, 'have you not read my poems? Why, that's Nab-Scar. There are frequent allusions to it in my writings. Don't you remember the lines?' and he repeated in a clear, distinct voice a well-known passage from 'The Excursion.'

"The name of Southey having been accidentally mentioned, I inquired as a matter of literary history whether, as was commonly believed, he had impaired his health and his intellect by too much mental exertion, and thus brought on that comparative darkness of mind which clouded the last months of his life. 'By no means,' said Wordsworth; 'Southey was a most methodical worker. He systematized his time. He was never confused or in

a hurry, and got through a deal of labour with an amount of ease and comfort which your hurry-scurry kind of people can neither accomplish nor understand. The truth is — at least, I think so — that his mind was thrown off its balance by the death of his first wife, and never afterwards wholly recovered itself.'

"I reminded him at this point that the late Mr. Laman Blanchard, whose sad story was then fresh in the recollection of the public, had been reduced to a state of insanity by a similar bereavement. From that moment my name seemed to fade away from Mr. Wordsworth's recollection, and he always addressed me during the remainder of our interview as Mr. Laman Blanchard. His sister, Miss Wordsworth, was wheeled into the garden in a little garden-carriage, or chair, impelled by Mrs. Wordsworth. I wore on my head a Glengarry travelling-cap, with a sprig of heather; and Miss Wordsworth no sooner caught sight of me than she exclaimed in a shrill voice, 'Who's that man, brother?' 'Oh, nobody, my dear,' he replied. 'It's only Mr. Laman Blanchard.' I gently hinted my right name. 'It's all the same to her, poor thing,' he rejoined.

"He would possibly have added more, but the unfortunate lady interrupted him by commencing to sing the well-known Scotch song —

> A Highland lad my love was born,
> The Lowland laws he held in scorn.

She sang one verse with much correctness, and was commencing another when Mr. Wordsworth led me away. 'This is a painful scene, Mr. Blanchard,' he said; 'let us go into my room, and I will read you some more passages from my poems about Nab-Scar.' "

Old Crome's Hobbema

[*A paper read at Norwich on May 5th, 1913, in aid of a fund to repair the roof of St. George's Church, Colegate, where Crome is buried.*]

I SUPPOSE that every painter, except here and there a Diogenes, admits to a favourite among earlier craftsmen. Even Michael Angelo, commanding and innovating as he was, delighted in Luca Signorelli; even the jealous and self-sufficing Turner confessed that Albert Cuyp excited him to envy; while Wilson worshipped Claude; and in our own day, as I have heard, Mr. Sargent steals often away across the North Sea to Haarlem to make copies of the most carelessly masterly of all the masters, Frans Hals himself.

John Crome's darling was also a Dutchman — the landscape painter Hobbema.

Every one must have heard how the old genial landscapist as he lay dying and now and then making with his hands the motions of painting a picture, to an accompaniment of satisfied murmuring, used his

latest breath in extolling his idol. "Hobbema, my dear Hobbema," he exclaimed as the light faded for ever, "how I have loved you!" and so was dead.

If this be a true story, his famous dying injunction to his son to dignify whatever he painted — "If your subject is only a pigsty, my boy, dignify it" — came earlier.

Be that as it may, we can feel certain that the passionate farewell to Hobbema is authentic; and it is because, in this city and in this house [1] (which has so many Cromes, and even his palette), to say new things about John Crome himself would be so arduous a task, if not an impossible one, that I thought of turning the lantern rather upon Crome's Hobbema and Hobbema's Ruysdael as an ingenious diversion, which would at the same time have genealogical propriety. For though we are all too sensible, I hope, to talk of imitators, the fact remains, that before Hobbema there was Jacob, or the great, Ruysdael, and before Crome, Hobbema; and what would have happened to hundreds of living and recent landscape painters both English and French had there been no Crome, we need not stop to conjecture. For the House of Art, though it has many mansions, is built of stones joined together in such interdependence that it would hardly be possible to withdraw one without serious and far-reaching disturbance.

Whatever Crome gained from his darling — and

[1] Crown Point, the residence of Mr. Russell Colman.

most likely it was direction and enthusiasm more than anything else — when as a lad he borrowed from Thomas Harvey of Catton a picture by Hobbema to copy, he never achieved the indignity of being called, after a bad habit of which art critics are too fond, "The English Hobbema," although, according to Dawson Turner of Yarmouth, the banker and antiquary and one of Crome's patrons, he panted for it. Turner tells us that to wear that label — to be known near and far as "The English Hobbema" — would have been the summit of Crome's ambition; and Turner certainly ought to know, for he and Crome were intimate (although not so intimate as he and Cotman), and it was he who acquired Harvey's example of Hobbema and included a drawing of it, together with several Cromes, in his *Outlines in Lithography*, in 1840, a book which is the principal source of biographical information concerning Crome.

The Hobbema which Crome copied is there discovered to be a typical wooded scene, very like No. 995 in the National Gallery — a cottage on the right, peasants in the road, and leaves and branches over all. Dawson Turner bought it in 1815, and at his sale it passed to Lord Scarsbrick. I have not been able to trace its present abode.

The critics, however, although they let Crome escape them, did not completely fail in fixing their facile label somewhere; and it was poor Patrick Nasmyth who had to wear it. As "The English Hobbema" he was and is known.

In any case, Crome can never have it now, for enough time has passed to make it clear as crystal that he was not the English Hobbema any more than Hobbema was the Dutch Crome, but gloriously and eternally he was the English Crome.

And, to revert for a moment to Patrick Nasmyth, neither was he the English Hobbema, although often very near it, but a sincere individuality in art with a passion for Nature not less true than Crome's own, and other points of resemblance, including a kindred liking for the social glass, neither of them being in the least attracted by the frigid allurements of teetotalism. Nasmyth also came by his premature death in a manner only too similar to that of his great Norwich contemporary; for whereas Crome caught his fatal chill while painting a water frolic, Nasmyth caught his while painting some pollarded willows by the Thames. And while Crome *in extremis* called upon Hobbema in that fine rapture, Nasmyth's last words, as he sat propped up in bed to watch a thunderstorm, were: "How glorious it is!"

A little more about Harvey and Crome and Dawson Turner before we cross the North Sea. I cannot find out as much of Thomas Harvey of Catton as I should like; and I regret this, since a study of the earliest patrons of genius is as well worth making as any. The later ones are less important.

Harvey was both a pioneer and a friend in need, for he befriended Crome when that youth required

encouragement and the stimulus of being discovered. Crome was then a hobbledehoy painting carriage-wheels for Francis Whisler in Bethel Street, and sometimes a house, and sometimes a signboard, and even, according to Turner, now and then painting Cupids, and hearts with darts through them, on sweetmeats for a Norwich confectioner.

I wonder if it had before occurred to you that these things demanded an artist. I confess that it had not to me. But of course they do, just as, I suppose, those circular sweets with mottoes or protestations of affection upon them demand not only an author but a compositor and printer, and for all I know a proof-reader too.

Possibly, indeed, if not probably, while Crome was painting his confectionery, his friend, and afterwards painting partner and brother-in-law, Robert Ladbroke, was actually engaged in printing such sweets, for it was as a printer that he began his career. According to Dawson Turner, Ladbroke's artistic enthusiasm did much to kindle Crome's.

Thomas Harvey of Catton was a man of wealth and something of an amateur artist, as we know by his leaving behind him fifty etchings of cattle. But he was more of a connoisseur, and he was the possessor of a small collection of good pictures, including a Hobbema and Gainsborough's famous "Cottage Door," and he allowed Crome to copy all of these.

The second son of Thomas Harvey, a wool

merchant, Mayor of Norwich in 1748, whose portrait is in St. Andrew's Hall. Mr. Harvey married Lydia Twiss, daughter of an English merchant living in Rotterdam. Hence perhaps his interest in Dutch painting.

One of his brothers-in-law was Richard Twiss, who wrote Travels in Portugal, Spain, Ireland and France, which had some vogue in their day. Another brother-in-law was Francis Twiss, author of an Index to Shakespeare and the husband of Mrs. Siddons's sister, Francis Kemble, and these were the parents of a minor wit and man about town named Horace Twiss, whose good things were in everybody's mouth in the first half of the last century.

Thomas Harvey died in 1819. He not only encouraged Crome by putting his pictures at his disposal, but introduced him both to Opie, who later painted the fine portrait of Crome now in the Castle Gallery here, and to Beechey (afterwards Sir William), who had come to Norwich to court a miniature painter; and Beechey, when Crome went to London for a brief period, let him use his studio there, and was generally useful and stimulating.

To Harvey, then, all praise is due from every lover of John Crome.

The later patron, Dawson Turner, was younger than Crome by seven years and survived him for nearly forty. Interesting as are his recollections of the artist in the *Outlines in Lithography*, they are impaired by the author's high estimation of himself.

The reader feels that the principal motive of the publication was to illustrate the extent of Turner's culture. His taste, however, was sound enough, for in 1840 he had eleven Cromes, the best of which was the incomparably beautiful "Moonrise at the Mouth of the Yare," now in the National Gallery, one of the Salting pictures. What Mr. Salting gave for it I do not know, but at Turner's sale in 1852 it was allowed to go for £30, 10s.

Certain of Dawson Turner's statements I think we may doubt, as when he tells us that Crome had early difficulties of a "truly appalling kind," and hardships and trials "such as few have been able to overcome." The evidence is far from clear. It is not enough to say that the youthful Crome had to "resort to his mother's aprons and to the very ticking of his bed for canvas," for if we are to be harrowed by such proceedings as that, what can our feelings be with regard to Benjamin West's cat, from whose body, for his earliest paint-brushes, he plucked the living hair? As a matter of fact, Turner tells us, Crome made brushes from the same material; but he had the sagacity (or humanity, since charity begins at home) to employ not the family cat, but the landlord's, and he did not wrench his booty, but clipped it.

But was there much privation here? All children who express a powerful desire to paint do not develop into masters, and Mrs. Crome was too poor to afford to gratify her son's whim by more

direct methods. A little hardship does no boy any harm, and especially so if he is to be a genius.

All that we know for certain is that Crome was of needy stock and that he did certain odd jobs before he could get rightfully to work as a painter of pictures; while we know, too, that in later life, seated comfortably at his inn, of an evening, with plenty and admiration surrounding him, he liked to tell about his early struggles; but it is doubtful if those struggles were very serious, and we are all aware of what a temptation it is to the self-made man to exaggerate the difficulties of his task. Human nature has few more attractive foibles.

My own feeling is that, such as they were, Crome's privations were all over before he was well in his teens. After that he was lucky: lucky in meeting his partner and brother-in-law Ladbroke, lucky in meeting Harvey and Opie and Beechey, and luckiest when such a highly respected, important gentleman as John Gurney of Earlham engaged him to teach his brood of seven Quaker daughters, among them that Betsy Gurney who afterwards became Elizabeth Fry, when it must have been fairly known in Norwich that Crome's eldest child was born only three weeks after its parents' marriage.

The only piece of really poignant misfortune that I can find about Crome is the refusal of the landlord of the "Leg of Mutton," for whom he had painted a signboard, to pay for it. Crome had painted it raw and the landlord wanted it cooked.

Allan Cunningham (who did not, however, include Crome in his *British Painters*) divides the responsibility for his culture very exactly. It was, he tells us, with John Gurney of Earlham, among the Lakes, that Crome "felt his notions of landscape painting expand"; while it was with Dawson Turner that the young painter "conversed on art, on literature, and other matters of purity and excellence." Dawson Turner, we may feel sure, was ready to oblige with any amount of such talk.

Cunningham, however, was not an inspired biographer or critic, for after an excellent passage emphasizing Crome's love and knowledge of Nature, he undoes his praise with a concluding sentence that was meant to clinch all, but fails rather miserably. "With Crome," he says, "an ash hung with its silver keys was different from an oak covered with acorns."

The most interesting thing that Dawson Turner tells us is that Crome returned from one of his later annual visits to London with his whole soul aglow with admiration of the great Turner's landscapes at the Royal Academy. Since Crome died in the spring of 1821, this remark refers probably to 1818, 19, or 20. In 1818 Turner exhibited "Raby Castle," "The Packet Boat from Rotterdam to Dort becalmed," and "The Field of Waterloo"; in 1819, "The Entrance to the Meuse" and "Richmond Hill on the Prince Regent's Birthday"; and in 1820, "Raphael accompanied by La Fornarina preparing

his pictures for the decoration of the Loggia of the Vatican." I expect it was either the Dort packet-boat or the Meuse which particularly delighted Crome.

In all his career Crome sent only fourteen pictures to the Academy, having the Norwich Society's Exhibitions to supply first, and how the great Turner considered these, or if he looked at them at all, we do not know. But apart from his natural scent for a rival, Turner should have been interested by Crome, for Crome could get very near that golden light which Turner, standing once before a picture by Cuyp, said he would give £1000 to reproduce.

Turner and Crome had much in common. Not only had both imitated Wilson in their time, but both were devoted to Cuyp, and Turner, whatever he may have felt about Hobbema, had such an admiration for Jacob Ruysdael, Hobbema's master, that he whimsically gave the name of Ruysdael to a Dutch seaport in one of his National Gallery pictures — purely out of homage.

Little enough is known of any Dutch painter, and less of Crome's Hobbema than most. In that wonderful seventeenth century of pictorial genius, Holland seems to have been so rich in artists that they ceased to be remarkable, and it is a question if, had a Dutch *Dictionary of National Biography* been in course of preparation, artists would have got in it at all.

Gerard Dou might have been there, for he was

in great demand among collectors, and no doubt Vandyck, for his aristocratic connexions at the English Court; but I doubt if Rembrandt would have been under R, and I am certain that you would have looked in vain under H for one Meindert Hobbema. Because Meindert Hobbema ceased earlier than most to be a painter, and during his painting years was hardly known at all by the public, although he had many friends amongst artists.

So far as the records go, he was born at Amsterdam or Koeverden (or even Middelharnis) in 1638, at a time when England was excited by the case of John Hampden and the ship money, and when a famous physician named Thomas Browne, who is one of the glories of this city, was thirty-three.

It is conjectured that Hobbema's first master was Salomon Ruysdael, uncle of the more famous Jacob and himself a fine landscape painter. Salomon's exact dates are as elusive as those of most of his artist contemporaries; but we may take it that by 1655, when Hobbema would be fifteen, the master was approaching his sixtieth year, while his nephew Jacob was then a young man in the middle twenties.

Salomon was true to Haarlem, that pleasant Dutch city whose vast church rises like a mammoth from the plain in so many of Jacob's pictures, and we may suppose that Hobbema lived there too during his pupilage. Most probably he passed from Salomon to Jacob. It is known at any rate that Jacob was both a friend and an influence.

Hobbema could not have had a better friend, for Ruysdael, as henceforward Jacob shall be called (his uncle Salomon now receding to the background), was a man of great kindness of heart and fidelity, and we may be certain that he followed painting with a passionate devotion, although when quite a boy he is said to have wished to be a doctor and even to have spent some time in medical studies. And here a comparison with Crome is suggested, although to set it up would be going too far; yet the fact remains that two years of Crome's boyhood were given to running errands for Dr. Rigby of Norwich, and during this period he was sufficiently advanced on the road at any rate towards empiricism as to amuse himself by changing the labels on the medicine bottles, very much as Mr. Bob Sawyer's boy might have done; but once, it is known, he had (in the doctor's absence) enough courage and address to bleed a patient almost to death.

It is probable that Ruysdael was taught by his uncle, before medical ambition took him, but Allart van Everdingen, who was glibly called "The Salvator Rosa of the North," is said also to have been his master. Everdingen had had the advantage, very unusual with Dutch artists, of being shipwrecked on the coast of Norway, and while in that land he had seen and admired such waterfalls as his pupil Ruysdael (whose name oddly enough signifies foaming water) was to become so famous for depicting.

Such, then, was Ruysdael and his early career.

Dutch Influences

Before continuing the brief outline — all we can discover — of Hobbema's life, let us for a moment return to the engaging subject, started a little while back, of the relationship of artist to artist. We first heard our own Crome exclaiming, "Hobbema, my dear Hobbema!" We have now seen Hobbema in Salomon Ruysdael's painting-room; just as, years earlier, Salomon himself had studied in the painting-room of Jan van Goyen, whose golden placid seas and golden serene rivers light up so graciously whatever rooms they occupy.

Now, that Norfolk gentleman and Crome's patron whose name cannot be too deeply carved on a cornice of the House of Art, Thomas Harvey of Catton, had an example not only of Hobbema but of Van Goyen for the young sign-painter to copy and adore. And though the glory that is Crome would, as I hold, always have been the glory that is Crome, yet there is no harm in believing that he would not have paid quite such loving attention to the trunk and foliage of the Poringland oak but for Hobbema, or have bathed Mousehold Heath in quite such a lovely aureous light but for Van Goyen.

Let me add that in the list of that sale of Crome's possessions which was held at Norwich in September 1821 are a Hobbema, a Ruysdael, a Van Goyen, a Van de Velde, and a Cuyp; but since the Hobbema fetched only thirty-six shillings and the Van Goyen only five guineas, it is conjectured that they were not the originals but probably Crome's early copies.

To-day, however, what would not some of us give to have the chance of buying even those?

One more allusion to the associated elements of the House of Art before Hobbema again claims us.

In the National Gallery is an example of his master Salomon which, in Sir Edward Cook's catalogue, has only one quoted reference to it. But how do you think that reference runs? It is from a writer in the *Quarterly Review*, who finds in it "a peculiarly sharp, clear, and firm touch, very like that of Stark." Now Salomon, in the seventeenth century, taught Hobbema, who was Crome's darling; and James Stark of Norwich was articled to John Crome of the same city in 1811, for three years, to be instructed in the art and mystery of painting English landscape. When I add that, in Mr. Binyon's phrase, the truth of which you may easily prove by a visit to the Castle Gallery and by certain of the examples in this house, "Stark was more faithful to Hobbema than Crome was," you will see in what labyrinths the students of derivatives in art are liable to find themselves.

Supposing that Hobbema began to paint independently at the age of twenty, we will put 1658 as the year of his emancipation. Ruysdael, who by this time was probably his principal companion, was then nearing thirty, and it may be that they moved to Amsterdam together about that time. Ruysdael was to make that city his headquarters until 1681, Hobbema for ever. From Amsterdam they had of

course to make journeys in search of their own delectable scenery. Hobbema's subjects were drawn chiefly from Gelderland, where trees abound, and where Ruysdael must often have gone too, judging by the similarity of certain of their pictures.

Ruysdael is credited also with more extended travels, as far south as Italy and as far north as Scandinavia, but nothing is known for certain, save that many of his landscapes are not Dutch. Who, however, shall say that he did not find many of them in the mind's eye — a source of inspiration which even the most realistic painters have not at times disdained? But a study of Hobbema's work — and at the National Gallery there are eight examples for the student — leads one to the belief that *he* painted only what he saw.

A concise comparison between the two friends would call Ruysdael the more poetical, Hobbema the more natural. Between them they accounted for most of the moods of the skies, the water, and the soil of their beloved Holland.

One feels in the presence of all Hobbema's work that he kept closely to the fact. Whatever he painted, surely was like that, we say. And we can derive the broad facts of his character as we stand before it. A plain, straightforward man, fond of clarity, simplicity, and the familiar; unambitious; not too gay, although not seriously discontented; expecting little of life. Such we may safely infer from his very similar canvases painted so carefully

but without joy, always under similar atmospheric conditions.

We miss alike the variety, the strength and experimentalism of Ruysdael and the benignancy and full-bloodedness of Crome. But how exquisite is Hobbema's work and how minute his enjoyment in Nature! His love of trees, and particularly the oak, amounted to a passion. He rejoiced in foliage, never abashed by difficulties of translating it into paint, with real light and air amid the branches; but rather indeed seeking them. For the most part, as the National Gallery examples, which are good and typical, tell, he chose the glade, with a cottage here, a water-mill there, and the million leaves over all. And looking at these pictures, we can hear Hobbema saying of the murmuring wood, "*This* is my Academy" just as Crome said it of the river bank, as he and his pupils were sitting one day at their work beside the Yare.

The National Gallery is peculiarly fortunate in possessing, beyond the reach of transatlantic envy and riches, Hobbema's strangely fascinating and very different picture, "The Avenue at Middelharnis" — Middelharnis being one of the towns which claim the artist as a son. It is Hobbema's simplest scene, and I have far more confidence in saying that it is his best than I have in agreeing with Mr. Theobald and other critics in their sweeping appraisement of the "Poringland Oak" as Crome's best.

"The Avenue at Middelharnis"

"The Avenue at Middelharnis" stands alone. No other Hobbema has such character. I wish I had a screen on which to throw a photograph of it, to bring it to your thoughts more vividly; for it is one of those pictures that photography cannot much harm, the colour of it being subservient to feeling. On the other hand, it is also one of the most easily remembered pictures in the world, so that probably while I am now speaking you are all reconstructing in your minds the lopped trees, the far-away church with its bulbous spire, the gardener pruning in the right foreground, and the sportsman with his dog in the middle distance — these last being perhaps the work of a figure painter called in for the purpose. But it is not they that matter. What matters is the landscape and the truth with which earth and sky have been painted by this sincere soul.

The partially illegible date may be 1669 and it may be 1689. My own guess is that it is 1669; but whether painted then or many years later, it is Hobbema's last dated work, for a reason to which we shall soon come.

These pictures are on one end wall of Room IX in the National Gallery. The opposite wall is given chiefly to Ruysdael and one of the side walls to Albert Cuyp, and the interesting thing is that it is not Hobbema and not Ruysdael but Cuyp who stays in our mind in association with the works of John Crome when we move on to Room XXI, where they are gathered. Hobbema was his dear Hobbema,

and the Poringland oak, as I have said, perhaps would not have been quite the tree it is but for Hobbema's genius; yet in standing before the National Gallery Cromes it is Cuyp of whom we think most.

Mention of the Middelharnis gardener and sportsman reminds me that Ruysdael and Hobbema had yet another point in common beyond their love of Nature and their love of Holland and their truth and patience. They both employed the services of the same figure painters when it chanced that the picture needed a human element beyond their own capacity to render. This outside assistance was of course often enough called in by artists of every period, but more perhaps by the Dutch than by any; for it was peculiarly in the Dutch character to specialize — Hobbema, for example, in foliage; and Ruysdael in great prospects and waterfalls; and the superb and joyous Van der Heyden in street façades. Hence all of them, now and then, were glad of help with their peasants and passers-by. And whether or not Hobbema could find purchasers, he could always find the highest form of such help; which, as Bryan points out, is an indication that, no matter how collectors viewed him, he was held in high esteem by his fellow-craftsmen.

Both he and Ruysdael had recourse chiefly to Nicholas Berchem, Wouwermans, and Adrian van der Velde.

Berchem, who was Ruysdael's closest friend and

a pupil of Van Goyen, is famous for his serene scenes of peasants and cattle: such goats as frolic in fairyland and such ruins in the background as never were anywhere but in his happy mind.

Philip Wouwermans, who was also of Haarlem, is known chiefly by his battle pictures, always with a white horse in them, that animal being as dear to him as a spot of red was to Corot. If we may believe the ascriptions of his works scattered all over Europe, this country, and doubtless America too, Wouwermans painted more industriously than almost anyone in a profession notorious for productivity.

The third assistant, Adrian van der Velde, a pupil of Wouwermans, was a very charming painter of landscape and rural scenes, but a large part of his time was given to figure painting for others. In particular he is said to have humanized the urban paradises of Van der Heyden.

Of all these men, who did for Hobbema, on occasion, what Michael Sharp and William Shayer did for Crome, examples are to be seen in our National Gallery and at Hertford House, and if these words of mine have the effect of sending any of you to those collections on your next visit to London, I shall be well repaid; for it is the chief ambition of the lover of pictures, and sometimes his reward, to make two persons enter the National Gallery where only one entered before.

A word as to Crome's allies in making his pictures more human or animated. Michael Sharp was a painter of portraits and figure subjects who, like Crome, but more regularly so, was a pupil of Beechey. It was he who put in the bathers in the "Poringland Oak," three of the boys being young Cromes, and the other the son of a Norwich mail-cart driver name Aldous. One of the Crome boys in the picture — the little fat naked one, I believe — was named after Sharp himself, Michael Sharp Crome, and he afterwards became a successful dancing-master in this town. Sharp died at Boulogne in 1840.

Crome had recourse now and then also to William Shayer, a young cattle painter, who introduced the cows in the picture of Chapel Fields in the National Gallery. Of Shayer I know nothing save that Crome named no dancing-master after him and he lived to a very great age, dying in 1879. The cattle in the great "Mousehold Heath" picture had nothing to do with Crome at all, but were added after his death by an unknown hand.

Returning now to Hobbema once more, we come upon disaster. Hobbema married in 1668. He was then thirty and his wife thirty-four; and his best man was his friend Ruysdael, who through life remained a bachelor. Note the year of the marriage — 1668 — and remember what was said just now about the date of "The Avenue at Middelharnis." The tragedy is that whether that picture's date is

1669 or 1689, it was Hobbema's only work of art after his marriage.

Whatever of happiness Hobbema's union with Mrs. Hobbema may have brought him, it was the end for us; for his wife, who had been a domestic servant in the family of the Burgomaster of Amsterdam, chancing to be acquainted with a woman of influence, used that acquaintanceship so adroitly that her husband was appointed at once to a post under the wine customs. This brought in enough to live upon, and was no doubt a more dependable business than that of painting sunlight through trees, however wonderfully. In times of stress landscapes are the first things we cut off; whatever happens, whether of good or ill, men must have wine.

How many geniuses have been connected with the excise I have not inquired; but it is interesting to find the rural painter Hobbema and the peasant poet Burns together in that galley. Hobbema, however, differed from Robbie in having to pay for his position. The influential friend of his wife was rewarded by an annual grant from the artist of 250 florins, to be paid until she, through marriage, could afford to do without it. The deed still exists.

I said a little while back that the name of Thomas Harvey of Catton, the intermediary between Hobbema and Crome, should be engraved on a cornice of the House of Art. What then should be done with Mrs. Hobbema? Let us hope that

she brought her husband many compensations for the divine fire which she had taken from him. Whatever excellence he may have attained as an exciseman, we can only exclaim, in Mr. Dobson's phrase in one of his fables, "But O the artist that was lost!" And yet if "The Avenue at Middelharnis" — his best picture, as I believe — is the only one painted after Mrs. Hobbema began her reign, as is stated in the memoirs, then perhaps after all she should have her golden letters too, for it may be that the difference in quality — the beautiful melancholy of it — is due in some subtle way to her alienation of her husband from his chosen path; and thus everything came out right. A wise fatalism would lead us to that conclusion; for only by the steps of the journey, whether joyously springy or painful, can the goal be reached.

Since Hobbema was only thirty when he married, it is to his wife's commercial instinct that must be attributed the chief cause of the scarcity of his pictures. Compared with that of most of the greatest Dutch painters — always excepting such notably rare masters as, for example, Vermer of Delft, Fabritius, and Seghers — Hobbema's output was small, and until recently nine-tenths of his paintings were in England. To-day I fear that this proportion has decreased, for there is a work of art which latterly has become more precious to the English collector than any study of Dutch oaks or water-mills, and that is an American cheque.

But there are two other reasons for Hobbema's rarity. One is that he was probably minutely laborious in his methods (although that, it is true, applies to many of his more fruitful contemporaries), and therefore painted slowly and not overmuch; the other, that he was never in any demand, nor did he become popular till comparatively recently, so that not only were his living faculties discouraged, but those posthumous activities so urgent in the case of more desired artists have had little play. Corot, for example, has painted far more since his death than ever he did before it.

So little indeed was Hobbema in demand, that for a considerable time all prudent dealers who chanced to have any of his works on their hands were careful to put Jacob Ruysdael's signature to them, knowing that only thus was a purchaser likely to be found. The action was no doubt immoral — according, at any rate, to the standards of those of us who are not picture dealers — but I think that it had some justification in the extraordinary pleasure it would have given to Hobbema, could he have glimpsed the rascals at it through the loopholes of heaven. For I am sure his feeling for Ruysdael was so near idolatry that he was capable of being flattered by the false ascription.

Little other information concerning Hobbema can be gathered, save the fact that he had one son and two daughters, of whom, however, nothing is known; and that he fell upon poverty. Van Goyen had died

in 1666; Salomon Ruysdael in 1670. In 1681 Jacob Ruysdael, being taken ill, left Amsterdam for Haarlem, where he died in 1682. Hobbema lived on, in a house just outside Amsterdam, on the south side of the Rosengracht, opposite that one from which, in 1669, Rembrandt's body had been carried to the grave.

All we know for certain of these later years is that both Hobbema and his wife had pauper funerals. His own was on December 14th, 1709.

Two centuries later one of his pictures fetched eight thousand guineas at Christie's.

Persons of Quality

I. — Mr. Frank, of Bologna

BOLOGNA'S greatest pride is, I suppose, Guido Reni; but he would not be my choice. Nor would Giulio Romano, or the mild Francia, or Giovanni of Bologna, who made the Neptune fountain, and whom Landor told Emerson he preferred to Michael Angelo; although he did not, I think, quite mean it. (We say odd things to Amercians, just for fun, sometimes.) I should name Mr. Frank, for many reasons, such as (*a*) Mr. Frank is alive, and (*b*) Mr. Frank befriends the friendless and houses the homeless, and (*c*) Mr. Frank is an arboriculturist, and (*d*) Mr. Frank loves the English soil and most of the things that it produces.

Mr. Frank is seventy: spare, alert, vigorous. His nationality is probably German Swiss; he is one of those strange people whose peculiar destiny it is to set roofs over English and American travellers; provide meals to nourish them and beds to rest them; and (the next day) to place before

them reminders that this, after all, is not Arcadia. Mr. Frank, being true to his blood, keeps an hotel, but it is unique among hotels in being a converted *palazzo* of the fifteenth century: spacious, splendid, quiet, and efficient — the Hôtel Brun, in fact.

But let no one think that in calling Mr. Frank an innkeeper he has been summed up. For he is more. Now and again, as one ranges this little planet, one meets with an innkeeper who is also a man, a brother, and even something beyond. There is one at Brighton, and Mr. Frank is another. Just as the city of Bologna differs from all other cities in being built upon colonnades of arches, so that you may walk almost uninterruptedly under cover for miles, and just as the Hôtel Brun differs from all other hotels in its origin and aristocratic bland self-possession, so does Mr. Frank differ from all other hotel proprietors in possessing a hillside villa, surrounded by vineyards, whither it is his delight to lead chosen guests, and also in having written a slender Guide to his adopted city, where he has been, since 1868, with naturally a reference or so to the Hôtel Brun in it, but no paltry mercenary emphasis at all: just these two modest sentences at the close — "Very often visitors say that, if they knew how interesting Bologna was, they would have arranged for a longer stay. May this little Guide tend to make Bologna better known!"

Mr. Frank not only keeps the Brun, but is a famous vintner, and exports wine to England, and it

was in the wine season that I met him. "Would you like," he said, falling with his English and his friendliness out of a clear sky into an alien world of waiters, "to see them picking grapes on the hill? It is only a few minutes distant." Of course; and off we started at nine in the morning along the Piazza Malpighi, past S. Francesco, with the green tombs of the Glossatori on pillars outside it, into the Via Sant' Isaia to the boulevard, and then up a steep and narrow road, past one villa after another, until we turned in at the hospitable gate. The sun was already powerful, lizards were darting like shadows over the walls, and Bologna's red roofs below were beginning to smoulder.

Mr. Frank had been topographer and historian on the way up; once inside his grounds he became a botanist and an arboriculturist. He led us from flower to flower, from tree to tree, including, I am happy to say, the best of all, the *ficus aurea* (to adopt his own learned tongue at this stage), into which he sent an ancient blue-linened gardener, with a neck of that crocodile-skin consistency and pattern which the Italian peasants so often possess, to pick a basket of "honey drops," as these little yellow figs are called, and these he divided into four with great dexterity and neatness with his knife, one after the other, until we had learned to do it ourselves. And so we passed through the vineyards, where the peasants were piling purple grapes and green into barrels, some day to warm the heart as

Sangiovese and Cabernet, Trebbiano and Sauvignon, to the villa itself, which was as comfortable as any house could be asked to be, and had the added attraction of two round-eyed grandchildren in the midst of dolls and Teddy bears.

Beside it were dark walks of clipped box, fragrant with that box-leaf scent, the same everywhere, which carries the mind so quickly to other haunts and reminds me always of the châlet above Burford Bridge, and here and there a statue or terminal figure, and everywhere a sentinel cypress looking on, and at one place the opening to a subterranean passage a hundred yards long; and above the villa, always climbing, greater trees, such as the Scotch fir; and more vineyards, where we ate grapes of all denominations, and found the muscatel the most alluring; and a cattle-shed containing two of the great, white, placid cows of Lombardy; and so to a chestnut grove where classical poetry must surely have been written, with purple colchicums and cyclamen in the grass. And all the while Mr. Frank had never ceased to touch lovingly this trunk and that, recalling the year in which he had planted them, or some other association; describing the joy of the spring on this hillside, its birds and song; or asking for particulars concerning the growth of certain flowers in England. All collectors who love their possessions tenderly are good company; but a collector of trees and flowers in a foreign country is peculiarly interesting, especially when he has for

their well-being so watchful an eye and instant a hand.

Mr. Frank says at the beginning of his little Guide that the visitor to Bologna will find "its thrifty citizens courteous and obliging, and will go away impressed with the vigour of the men of Bologna and the comely dignity of her women, even those of the lower classes." That is true. And if the visitor has luck, he can go away impressed also with the gentle charm and profound love of Nature of an innkeeper in ten thousand.

II. — George Morrow[1]

It is George Morrow's special gift to pencil his comments on the margin of life. The soul of modesty, his route is essentially the by-way. The high road is for others: for Mr. Partridge and Mr. Raven Hill, both concerned with politics, English and foreign, international complications, and the other grave matters upon which we look to *Punch* for a weekly criticism; for Mr. Townsend and Mr. Gunning King, who delineate the straightforward humours of domestic experience. Mr. Morrow's game is humbler

[1] The illustrations to this essay — and I wish there were twice as many — are reproduced by the kind permission of the proprietors of *Punch*.

and more idiosyncratic — the record of his own quaint ruminations. Whatever happens, he has his thoughts, and no one else has thoughts at all resembling them. He is probably the most consistently original comic draughtsman now working. Caran d'Ache was technically more brilliant and more carelessly witty;

THE LITTLE WORRIES OF THE MIDDLE AGES

A knight overhauling his stock of doubtful coins prior to a distribution of largesse

and Caran d'Ache was as certainly George Morrow's predecessor as Wilhelm Busch was Caran d'Ache's. But no one who knows Morrow's work would for a moment suggest that he is derivative, except now and then in external form. His orginality is incorruptible: I never met anyone who more detested imitation and "conveyance." Even if a suggestion

is given to him, the treatment is his own: that is to say, the idea is enriched by the play of the artist's personality. But only one or two per cent. of his drawings owe, I believe, anything to outside hints: the rest are the result of their creator's sidelong humour unaided. Caran d'Ache not only made the pictorial sequence peculiarly his own, but founded

TOURISTS LISTENING TO THE SOUND OF MULL

upon history some very pleasant *jeux d'esprit;* yet between him and Mr. Morrow there is no real similarity. The witty, dashing bravado of the Frenchman is one thing, and the quaint, ruminative subtleties of our Irishman are another; while both contribute radiance to the slender band of great comic outlinists.

George Morrow has this quality in common with Caran d'Ache: he scamps nothing and forgets

nothing. Every part of the picture, however crowded it may be, has had consideration. It is this minute thoughtfulness which makes his work so rich, for one is continually coming upon new details of fun or mischief, overlooked before. The com-

JULIUS CAESAR INTERVIEWING BARBARIAN CAPTIVES ON THE SUBJECT OF THE CURE AND PREVENTION OF BALDNESS

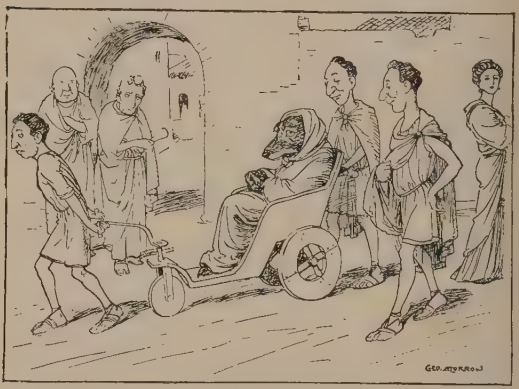
monest charge that is brought against many of our comic draughtsmen is that their drawings are "so soon over." It could never be urged against George Morrow, whose backgrounds work for their living too. This stealthily accumulative sense of the ridiculous is very rare.

I have said that Mr. Morrow does not illustrate what are called "social subjects." Not that he is insensitive to the humours of normal everyday life (far from it!): but their translation into black and white is not his first *métier*. The fanciful and grotesque are nearer his heart. Nevertheless, I have always thought the legend beneath his *Punch* drawing of the poor woman and the wag one of the classic contributions to that paper. The words, I may remark, are the artist's own. The wife of the unemployed says, "My 'usband finds it very 'ard — very 'ard indeed, sir — to get any work at his trade." "I suppose," replies the facetious gentleman (getting off an old joke), "I suppose he's a snow shoveller." "Indeed no," says the woman. "No such luck, sir. 'E's only a snow shoveller's labourer."

One of Mr. Morrow's art editors once said — not in any spirit of complaint, but merely as a curious fact — that all the people in his drawings are idiots. The criticism may go too far, but it is illuminative too, for it suggests the world of busy simpletons in which this artist's pencil has its being. He has created a universe of fussy foolishness and petty importance. He is the Mantegna of Gotham.

But even more do I value his work as a historian. It would seem to be the peculiar province of Irish humorists to show us the unfamiliar side. Oscar Wilde did it again and again: a trick of inverting truth was signally his. Mr. Shaw is continually startling us by the persuasiveness with which he pre-

sents the case of the minority. Mr. Morrow illumines the unexpected too, and not only the unexpected but that variety of the unexpected which we ourselves had never thought about. As one example take his drawing of the mediæval lord who is about to distribute largesse to the crowd. No one else



TOUCHING FILIAL PIETY OF ROMULUS AS SHOWN IN HIS TREATMENT OF HIS FOSTER-MOTHER

commissioned to execute this scene would have remembered that mediæval lords probably performed such duties very reluctantly, and first, assisted by their prudent ladies, went through their coffers for coins of doubtful integrity — to get rid of those first. Yet how natural — when you do think of it!

In looking at these historical and biographical episodes, the curious thing that strikes one is that so much had been left for Mr. Morrow to think of. Consider, for example, how many funny men have been at work on the humours of history — from Gilbert à Beckett and his illustrator down to the entertaining hand that depicted the Cork Lino drolleries of a few years ago. And remembering the many obvious jokes, look again at Mr. Morrow's drawing of a little supper party at the Borgias'. It is astonishing that this was waiting for him; and yet not astonishing at all. Here one sees at once a new and subtler treatment: the external humour has been supplemented by a rush of absurdity, and psychology has been added. For Mr. Morrow is always a psychologist: he is always interested, not only in the joke, but in its dramatis personæ. There is a double impact: on you, the reader, and on them, the participants.

Take, again, the picture of Romulus and Remus. One would have thought that every joke possible about those brothers had been made fifty years ago. But it was left for George Morrow to depict one more perfectly natural yet perfectly absurd episode in their career: the two brothers piously taking their foster-mother for a ride in a Bath chair. In the same manner is his scene from the life of Julius Cæsar. Given the subject, to find a novel humorous treatment of Julius Cæsar, how many comic draughtsmen in the history of black-and-white would have

hit on anything so amusing or quaint as George Morrow's picture of the bald Emperor interviewing three hairy barbarian captives as to how they managed to get such a growth! And having sufficiently enjoyed this scene, who would believe that a further and equally diverting variation on the theme of Cæsar's baldness was still possible? Yet after an

A LITTLE SUPPER AT THE BORGIAS'

interval of a few years we had from the same pencil the picture of the loyal but misguided Roman who had presented his Emperor with his bust tactlessly constructed from an ostrich egg. In the misgivings of the artist, suddenly beginning to be aware of his blunder (yet the artist all the time), and the conflict in the Emperor's mind as he analyses for motives to decide between deliberate insult or thoughtless zeal,

the full flavour of Morrow's curious humour may be found. For it is his special gift to invent asses and then be rather sorry for them. But they must be exploited first.

The peculiar charm of these drawings is that not

GROWING PEAS FOR POLICE-WHISTLES AT THE WORMWOOD SCRUBS PEA-FARM

only are they exceedingly funny, both in the gross and in detail, every expression being separately imagined by the artist, but they are also within the bounds of possibility, if not probability. It is normal humour all the time. Such a simple, although superficially comic, device as inverted chronology our artist disdains: he would never, for example, put

an ancient into a motor-car, or bring William the Conqueror to England in a steamer, which was, I remember, one of the great jokes of the comic historian O. P. Q. Philander Smith. His method is subtler and truer, as, for example, when he shows his centaur harnessed to a chariot to represent an early cab, and the centaur (described as the "primeval extortionist") looking at a coin in his hand which his fare has just given him, and asking, "'Ere, wot's this?" That had to be thought of by some one, but George Morrow alone could think of it. The drawing might stand as a symbol of his reconciling humour, which fuses the past and the present, proves that we were always as absurd as now, and bridges the ages with laughter.

III. — Wish Wynne[1]

Wish Wynne is a new music-hall singer; and not only a new singer, but a new variety of singer. She is quiet, humane, understanding; she is out to

[1] Since this essay in appreciation was written, in 1912, the lady has gone on the stage proper, and, as I correct these proofs, is delighting audiences in Mr. Bennett's "Great Adventure." But I want to see her in the halls again. Those she lifts. And since she herself writes all the words of her songs and sketches, and another could — although, I admit, not half so well — speak Mr. Bennett's lines, the loss is great.

destroy nothing; she can do without laughter; she can do without an orchestra or limelight, if need be. She has truth and restraint on her side, and something more: she has sympathy, and insists on adding yours to it. She is without vanity, and in her own person, when not singing a character-song, might even disappoint, for her assurance is by no means perfect until she believes herself to be some one else. Her voice also is hardly up to a song pure and simple, being better suited for a semi-recitative; it has a faint American echo, although she seems to be English otherwise.

But such defects matter nothing. Many a fine artist has had to forget self and impersonate another before acquiring power, and Wish Wynne is among them. Directly she assumes the guise of a downtrodden London girl everything changes. No more indecisions; the character is as clear and firm as an etching. These are her special forte: little London girls, with a knowledge of life and a capacity for enjoyment, whose destiny it is to be misunderstood and put upon. It is a common type, and Wish Wynne makes it extraordinarily real. You remember her half-tones after all the stridencies of the evening are happily lost.

Listening to Wish Wynne (what a clever name!), you realize that at last the halls have an artist again. She is not like anyone else, nor has she had a predecessor. Into this atmosphere of coarseness and furtive laughter she brings a clean humour, with

a leaven of pathos all her own. There have been slaveys on the music-hall stage time and again. Jenny Hill loved the type, and made it voluble and caustic; her daughter, Peggy Pryde, recaptured some of her vitality; while there was the astonishing Ada Lundberg, some twenty years ago, with a blacking-brush in one hand and a boot in the other, telling of the calamities that follow upon walking with a soldier. But these saw only the comic or sordid side of the slavey's life — or, to be more exact, comic *and* sordid, the blend that best produces music-hall laughter to-day: the side, in short, that the audience expected. Wish Wynne is different. She gives the audience not what they expect, and not, perhaps, wholly what they want, judging by the laughter that early in her songs one hears before a sentence is finished, prompted by the hope that it is to take a different and more conventional turn; yet once the silly creatures understand that here is a performer whose every word is of value and none has two meanings their attention is complete. No comic singer gets such rapt audiences.

In one of her songs she is the little slavey who believes that all her mistresses are against her. She passes them in review, and dismisses them as hopeless, one after the other, in a chorus beginning, "But 'er! Oh, 'er!" This is exact: there is not a false touch; and though it is frankly humorous, the singer gives it just that little addition of character — wistfulness and the comic critical spirit of the

Londoner mixed — which lifts it to a creation. Many singers could make an audience laugh with the same words; Wish Wynne alone could touch them too. In another song she is a child of a mean street, always in hot water with her mother and father, the victim of iron circumstance. But she has a consolation — the reflection, "No matter, they'll be sorry when I'm dead." Another song shows a very similar type whose particular cross is a playmate, Elsie Evelyn Martin. Elsie is spiteful and treacherous. Wish has "pinched" an apple; Elsie Evelyn begs her to "pinch" another for her, and, being refused, tells Wish's mother of the theft. The result is that the girl who is singing her woes has been forbidden to go to the Bible class: a peculiarly hard misfortune, since not only has she got by heart her hymn, her chapter of St. John, and her prayer, but close to the church is a lovely shop "where you can pinch 'em fine." Now, here is totally new ground being broken in music-halls. Before Wish a slum schoolgirl on the boards had sung only about what she saw through the keyhole when her big sister and her young man were together, and so forth. Nothing else was asked of her. Wish Wynne repulses such seaminess and gives us instead a little comedy of the soul.

One other departure has she made. She sings, as a country girl, a song about her young man. Now one knows what to expect when the "comédienne" or "soubrette" or "serio" offers this theme: probably the young man is a swindler and makes

off with her savings; almost certainly he is faithless. But Wish Wynne's lover is very plain (although she has "seen lads as ugly as he"), and she is in some doubt as to whether she really loves him enough, and her father and mother and friends are all against the marriage. She recognizes their practical wisdom, and yet — "I dunno." Each verse ends in this shy, affectionate dubiety. She even has decided to give him up, and then she looks at his faithful red hair and freckles and thinks of how kind he has been to her; and — "Well, I dunno." Now, here is more new ground; and though one does not want the halls to be visited by an inundation of sentimentality (as in this imitative profession is only too likely), yet when it is provided by such a true artist as this unobtrusive new singer we can be very glad to meet with it.

IV. — Masters, New and Old

The most remarkable thing about championship billiards — after the wizardry of it — is the gulf that divides the handful of best men from the handful of next best men, and the gulf that divides that second handful from every one else. In all other games you can count the absolutely first-class men by scores. I do not mean that there is not one a shade better

than the others, because there is: otherwise there would be no champion; but the throne is surrounded by claimants entitled to stand on the top step of the daïs. W. G. Grace, for example, was for a long time beyond all question the best cricketer; but other men occasionally had better seasons, and quite inferior players could bowl him out and defy his bowling. Mr. John Ball junior was the amateur golf champion, yet England and Scotland are sprinkled with men who can give him a stiff game, and he has been beaten, I suppose, on many links.

But in billiards it is a case of the best first and the rest almost nowhere; and at the present moment, among the continually active players, the best are only five in number: Stevenson, Inman, Reece, Diggle, and Aiken. I omit John Roberts, because not only is he old and ill but for years he has stood apart in aristocratic aloofness; I omit Peall and Dawson because they have retired, and Gray because he is a specialist.

Then comes the first gulf, on the hither (or our) side of which are Harverson and Smith and Cook and Newman and young Peall, for example.

And then comes the second gulf, and after that we need not trouble very much, for there is no magic left — nothing but merit and accomplishment; and so downwards to our own blundering efforts to get a decent spirit of obedience and good conduct into ivory, or even bonzoline.

It is only those that know something of what ivory

can do and should do under coaxing or compulsion who can really appreciate the wizardry of the best players. Because it really is wizardry — nothing else; and not the less so through one's knowledge that it has come from a whole lifetime of practice and thought. For he who would play billiards like one of these must do nothing else. Billiards must be his existence. A good game can be played by men immersed at other times in other pursuits; but wizardry goes only to those who not only start with a natural aptitude, in a billiards environment, but dedicate their bodies and minds to billiards as completely and thoughtfully as a devotee of religion. To know what to do and to do it accurately and beautifully; to know not only what one is doing with this stroke, but precisely what kind of position will be left; to alternate a softness of touch beside which the touch of a butterfly's wing were almost gross with a forcing power that would drive a nail through a plank; to break the balls after a series of nurseries with such precision of effort that they reassemble within an inch after a tour of the table by one of them; and to keep up these changing tactics, without intervals either for consideration or rest, during breaks of two, three, four, five, and six hundred — only by lifelong devotion can these marvels be accomplished.

Meeting Stevenson casually one would never dream that this was a champion of such a delicate and sensitive game. He is a compact, quiet, and

joyless, almost saturnine, looking man of a prevalent type. His hair and moustache are of the ordinary colour; his height is five feet seven inches; he was born in 1874 at Hull. He plays without animation, but swiftly, and now and then with the carelessness of a master — though never with John Roberts's arrogant insouciance — but for the most part he shows a scrupulous thoughtfulness. He is strong in every department; and I would rather see his nursery cannons than Reece's and his losing hazards than Inman's. In extricating himself from what look like impossible situations he can be magnificent, and again he will miss things so simple that one can but gasp. If his tactics were as profound as his technique he would never be hard pressed by any player; but his nature is simple, and he dislikes safety play. Left with an impossibility, he prefers to go for it rather than meet it with retaliatory guile. When waiting for his turn he sits motionless, with his cue vertically between his knees, and rarely watches the game. In fact, he has the impassivity of the professional at its best, but he has not the fire-proof temperament for the game quite as Inman has, or Roberts. He can be both bored and depressed. In watching Stevenson, one does not feel that one is in the presence of absolutely the highest genius, but absolutely the perfect artist.

Edward Diggle is the tallest of the group — six feet, if not more. He comes from Manchester and talks like it: descriptive reporters of his matches

call him the Mancunian. He was born in 1873. He has a little dark moustache and a long chin, and looks delicate, with some of the gentle wistfulness of the invalid in his face. Diggle is a classic player: doing the soundest things without haste or floridity. He advances to the table slowly, takes his position slowly, grounds his heavy cue on the cloth for a moment slowly, and then makes the stroke. He breaks all the rules which we are so carefully taught, both as to standing and as to making strokes; but he gets there. His accuracy is a joy, and his own particular top-of-the-table game — a red winner alternating with a cannon — although in other hands it might be very monotonous, is never, to me, monotonous in his. Why he ever breaks down is a mystery; but I imagine that it is due largely to want of physique. Also Diggle is, I am told, something of a humorist, and humorists are rarely champions of anything; while with him artistry predominates over ambition.

Reece, of Oldham, is as different from Diggle as can be imagined: an all-round athlete, very powerful, clean-shaven, whom one might take to be a successful trainer or stud-groom. He has all the quietude of a rich man's employee, together with the air which comes of receiving the obedience or admiration of inferiors. At his best he plays an exquisite game. His touch can be perfect. But his safety tactics are only second-rate, he is moodier than he ought to be, and a run of bad luck depresses and depreciates him.

When playing Inman he is peculiarly liable to low spirits and raspiness; and I don't wonder, for Inman is an antagonist requiring in his opponent an amount of phlegm that all Holland could hardly supply. Reece certainly has it not.

Melbourne Inman is indeed a hard nut to crack. Of all the great billiard players of the day he alone may be said to be out for blood. He is the only real fighter. The others are keen, no doubt, each in his way; but their keenness is tempered by personal idiosyncrasy — Diggle's by a low pulse, for example; Stevenson's by a master's disdain; but Inman — Inman is on the make, as we say, all the time. A little, lean, anxious, watchful Hebrew, aged thirty-five, he is worth watching, if only as an object lesson in patience, thoroughness, adroitness, and the art of giving nothing away. He brings the same care to every stroke, easy or difficult, taking no risks. Unlike the other great players of the day, he has no game of his own. Stevenson, for example, and Reece are each always hoping to bring the balls together and nurse them; Diggle manœuvres the white ball to the cushion side of the red on the spot and makes lengthy runs of red winners and cannons alternately; Gray keeps the red ball somewhere between the middle spot and the D, and builds up his score with losers from it on one side or the other. Inman has no specialty, except a liking to be "in hand," but employs all these devices as they occur with a power peculiar to himself of

leaving something on. The result is that not only is he more consistent in his breaks than his rivals, but he is free from the strain of playing with their anxiety for future combinations. Yet he is artist through and through as well, and it is good to watch the wan ghost of a smile cross his face after a great shot or a great fluke. He is the only one of the Masters whose expression ever relaxes. He is also the wiliest of them. His astuteness is worth many points to him; and that must be a clever man who outwits him in safety play.

Another reason for Inman's consistent success is that there is something antipathetic in his personality which seems to make all his adversaries play a little below themselves. What it is is not quite explicable: perhaps the reaction of just his sheer ambition: the knowledge that this man is out ultimately to defeat all comers and has no other purpose in life. Such a spirit animating one competitor could be seriously disconcerting to the other.

Anyway, there it is, and even Diggle, apathetic though he is, can feel it; while, as I have said, it has again and again reduced Reece to the condition of a jelly-fish. Personally, I have no doubt but that Inman and Mephistopheles are in league; for though I have seen all these players enjoy flukes, — *vols*, as the French say so much more vividly, — I have never seen any whose flukes have been so outrageous or have come at such opportune moments as Inman's. That he is the luckiest player is beyond question;

but I think that, like most lucky men, he deserves his good fortune, for he is a hard worker and he never relaxes, and if all-round-the-table play is needed he will do his best with it. Whatever he does, he will give the spectators an interesting time and his opponent a nervous one.

Fifthly, Aiken, the Scotchman. He is the tortoise among these hares, and one day will win. No glamour whatever, no sparkle; but steady, painstaking excellence. Perhaps none of them would so make an amateur unhappy, for his is more like the sublimation of the ordinary man's play.

And the greatest of them all, what of him? Happily, although he does not play any more, he is still with us, handling very ably a pen instead of a cue. I saw him last, after a long interval, in 1912, and coming away from Thurston's my head was so full of his commanding personality that when I was asked by an artistic friend, meeting me, if I had been to the Old Masters and which did I like best, it was impossible to reply anything but "Roberts." The monumental figure with the strong carven face and the white hair and beard was the same Roberts whom I had known slender and black, save for the added dignity of years. A little less brisk: that was all. He still never seemed to look at the balls at all, but merely made them obey him — as though his cue were a wand.

Diverse and wonderful are the gifts of God to man, varied are the manifestations of human genius.

This will repeople the world with men and women of his imagination, warm with life, and we call him Shakespeare; this will take brush in hand and evolve from wet paint new and lustrous aristocrats, and we call him Velasquez; and this again will stoop over a table of slate covered with green cloth and bend the capricious diabolical spirit of ivory to his will, and we call him Roberts.

On the afternoon that I saw him last, he scored with a rapidity that left one breathless; he made difficulties that he might extricate himself from them; he was full of fight; nothing but his great massive head was old. "The resource of the man!" sighed my neighbour. The first break that I watched ran to 170 and was cut short by a missed red loser so simple that anyone could have made it. But that has always been the great man's way: he has always disdained the easiest. His opponent followed, and by methods as painful and deliberate as Roberts's were careless and swift made a number of excellent book cannons. Roberts watched him all the time: none of the ordinary apathy of the waiting professional for him; none of Stevenson's forlorn gaze at his polished boots. The old lion was keen, he wanted the table again.

He soon had it, and was again away at the gallop, and not till the stroke with which the break ended did he make one that was not perfect—the object ball always as much under control as his own. Sad indeed that such mastery should be killed by age.

In any rightly constructed world John Roberts and Cinquevalli would equally live for ever. . . .

Watching Stevenson one marvels and marvels — and yet feels that some day, if one really gave one's life to it, one might be able to play billiards. Watching John Roberts one is certain that one never could. That is the difference.

V. — Henry Burstow

How many songs do you know? That would not be a bad leading question to a partner, say, at dinner, or any new acquaintance — meaning by "knowing," not only the existence of the song, but its words and music, and a capacity to sing it at any given moment, with or without accompaniment added. How many songs do I know? Well, in this embracive sense I know none, Nature having denied me a voice; but in the more meagre and contemptible sense of remembering the words only and venturing, in strict privacy — such as in bathrooms or on hill-tops — to drone them, I know perhaps five all through and some thirty, in parts, imperfectly. And you? Fifty, perhaps, but are you always pleased to sing them, no matter where you may be? Because that is one of the chief differences between Henry Burstow and other folks. Henry Burstow knows four hundred and twenty songs, and they are at the service of any-

one that he likes. Not that he can give them as roundly as he once could, when he was in his prime, for he is now eighty-six; but he can remember them right enough and make a brave show, and in 1906 he sang an average of ten of an evening to his wife — beginning on her seventy-eighth birthday and so continuing for forty evenings, in their home at Horsham, where they are still (1912) hale and jolly.

In the little book of Burstow's reminiscences which an admiring fellow-townsman has compiled from the old man's talk, a list of these songs is given, beginning with a number of Napoleonic carols of the Last Phase — such as "Boney's Farewell to Paris," "Boney's Lamentation" and "Dream of Napoleon," and passing on to soldier songs — "Up with the Standard of England," and "Madam, do you know my trade is war?"; sailor songs — "Joe the Marine" and the "Minute Gun at Sea"; Irish songs — "Larry O'Gaff" and "Pretty Susan, the Pride of Kildare"; rustic songs — "My good old father's farm" and "Butter, cheese and all"; pathetic ballads and humorous ballads, sentimental songs and comic songs, and a few classical gems, of which "When other lips" and "All among the barley" are examples. Such is Henry Burstow's repertory, much of which he acquired from his father, just by listening to him; and it is no small achievement to have lived a long life so tunefully and cheerfully as he has done, in great request at all jollifications and merry-makings by reason of this rare and cordial gift.

But that is not all. Whether or not it is a record to know at the age of eighty-five four hundred and twenty songs, I cannot say; but there is no question that Henry Burstow is a record-holder in another melodious direction, for he has participated in ringing a greater number of peals of bells than any living man. Bell-ringing has, indeed, been the passion of his life, song-singing a mere accident, and cobbling his trade purely as a means of obtaining enough gear and independence to enable him to hurry to the belfry with a mind at ease. He began to ring at Horsham in 1841, when he was only fifteen, and in 1907 he rang his last peal of 5040 changes, at Billingshurst, in Sussex, himself at the third rope. The bobs were then called by William Short; in the old days Henry Burstow was usually the caller. He gives a list of fifty-three belfries, mostly in Sussex, in which he has rung changes, and in several of which he has taught ringing too. On his wedding-day, in 1855, with seven companions, all cobblers like himself, he rang from morn to night, and at Warnham in 1889 he was concerned in 13,440 changes, which occupied seven hours and three-quarters. On his sixty-fifth birthday, in 1891, he took part in 6720 changes of bob-major in Horsham Church, four hours and six minutes being required. So that he has some claim to be honoured in his own town and vicinity if only for helping to crash out so much music over the Sussex meadows these threescore years.

Let me quote the concluding passage of his bell-

ringing memories, a kind of prose that (to our loss) is not much written now: —

"To all brother campanologists and friends who remain of the hundreds with whom I have had the pleasure of meeting and ringing in the above-mentioned belfries I hereby offer my kind regards and thanks for the hearty welcome and good fellowship they have always shown me. Their friendship has helped to make light and easy my advance through every phase of life, and given me a very pleasant outlook upon human nature. I can, alas! never meet them in their belfries again, but should any of them ever come to Horsham I can give them a humble but warm welcome in my little room at 28 Spencer's Road, where we can still enjoy, at least, the recollections of some of the merry old peals we have pulled together, and where they can have a few songs from a heart still warm and firm, if by a voice weakened by the inexorable operation of time. Peace to departed ringers whose bodies lie deaf to the delightful continuous sounds they once had a hand in creating! Good luck to all who remain! That these latter may be blessed with good health, firm friendships, and cheerful circumstances as I have been, and maintain their interest in campanology, their delights in the merry bell and supple rope as I have always been able to do, shall be my sincere wish as long as I live."

A cobbler should stick to his last, says the proverb.

It is a lie. He should, unless he is a contentious dull dog, do no such thing, but, when Nature has given him humane accomplishments, use them for the delectation of his fellows. The first conjurer I ever knew was a cobbler: a real conjurer, not a manipulator of elaborate machinery, but one who acted up to his motto, "The quickness of the 'and deceives the heye." Like Henry Burstow, he stuck to his last only so far as it was necessary; after that, like Henry Burstow, he was an artist and communicator of pleasure.

VI. — A. W. Rich

Mr. Rich is something of an anachronism. He has a Georgian face and prematurely white hair, and in knee breeches he would be a perfect Old English squire, or even an intellectual John Bull. Moreover, in the year 1913 he paints water colours which are in the great tradition of De Wint and Cotman, and (without any imitation) can hang his work among the work of these men with no suggestion of incongruity.

For years I have valued the New English Art Club's exhibitions as much because they gave fresh opportunities to see Mr. Rich's landscapes as for anything, and on three separate occasions I have

contrived to make one of these landscapes my own; and then the other day whom should I run into but the painter himself, instantly recognizable to any one who has seen Mr. Orpen's portrait of him in the grand manner, sketch-book in hand, against the open sky.

Mr. Rich was born in Sussex, the county he paints so like a lover, in 1856 (seven years after De Wint's death). His mother came from Plymouth (which gave the world Reynolds, Northcote, and Haydon), and his father from Tetbury, where there are Downs too, but not equal to those of Sussex; although any man who had walked from that Gloucestershire town as far as Froster Hill or Birdlip and looked over the Severn valley to the blue hills of Wales would have a better chance of becoming the father of a landscape painter than any who had not done this thing — that is to say, if Eugenics mean anything. The Lives of artists show us that painters may be divided into two classes, those who were encouraged by their parents to draw and those who were not (although a third group includes such others, of whom Opie is a good example, as those whose mothers favoured the pencil and whose fathers deplored it). Mr. Rich was fortunate in being one of the encouraged group. He was given Charles Knight's *Old England* when only five, and copied the cuts in it assiduously, and when he was nine he was taken to the National Gallery for the first time. His earliest love among the water-colour men was Peter De Wint, but he

admired and studied also Paul Sandby, Cotman, and John Varley.

And the result? Well, for my part, I find upon his parallelograms of Whatman, ten inches by eight, or thereabouts, more of the vital England that I know and revere — beneath English sky and filled with English atmosphere — than in the water colours of any other man now painting. He is at once stronger and truer than any of his contemporaries; although when it comes to prettiness he is beaten on all sides. But his austerity I like, and his desire for the secret too, leading him to look deeper into a wooded valley than anyone, and never to be afraid of the most fugitive cloud. Were he ever inclined to leave nature and take to super-nature, he could make a wonderful dark tower for Childe Roland's quest, and such a winding road beside a gloomy wood leading to it.

VII. — Two of our Conquerors

genée and pavlova

Although theirs the same lovely and joyous art, this blest pair of dancers could not well be separated by wider divergences; the one a merry blonde from busy, prosperous Denmark; the other the product of that strange, sombre, decadent country where East and West meet and barbarism seems never far distant.

Each appeals to a different mood. When it comes to actual dancing — to the precision and fluidity of the steps and movements — there is little to choose: Pavlova may be perhaps a shade more astoundingly accomplished. But for the most part our preference is not for the execution but for the executant. We like Pavlova best, or Genée best, according to our temperament, or according, as I say, to our mood. Pavlova is more languorous, more dangerous, more exotic; Genée is quicker, gay and jocund. Pavlova has more than an Oriental suggestion; Genée is one of us — a Northerner. Pavlova is *au fond* melancholy; Genée is a kitten.

The Russian is more beautiful; she has, as one imagines, a rarer beauty than any of her most illustrious predecessors, most of whom had a tendency to thick ankles and powerful legs. Pavlova might never have done anything but ride in a carriage or recline on a sofa — so soft and graceful is she; and her shoulders are never to be forgotten. But her face lacks expression. Her face, one says; yet as a matter of curious fact Pavlova has two faces, not as Janus had, but as a charming woman may have who is capable of apathy. One is amiable, the other is set, and they are strangely different: almost they might belong to different persons. Pavlova has two faces and only one expression for each; and here is one of the chief points of contrast between herself and Genée, for Genée is not only a dancer but an actress with a play and range of ani-

mation on her little mischievous upturned features for which many an actress who is actress and nothing else would give such of her pearls as had not been stolen.

In a little piece in which Genée has recently performed — an episode in the life of one of the most famous dancers of all, the Belgian Camargo — most of the emotions pass across her face: joy, disappointment, triumph, hope, fear, content; while now and then, as when she pretends that the king has repaid the boon, she is the incarnation of roguishness and the very spirit of teasing.

Pavlova would be lost here — just as Genée would be lost in the Bacchanale — although not so completely. Pavlova one can see making some kind of a brave effort with the king and the unhappy young soldier, although never to the point of touching the emotions, as Genée does; but Genée one cannot imagine for a moment in the amorous ecstasy of that wonderful vintage riot. Therein lies the essential difference between these two superb artists. Pavlova is for the sophisticated: Genée for the simple.

VIII. — Councillor Koppel

The other day my roving eye alighted on this paragraph, similar, alas! to too many which now find their way into print: —

"Yet another picture of considerable importance has to be added to the ever-growing list of Old

Masters that have left England never to return. It is the large 'Tribute Money,' by Rubens, which was exhibited at the Royal Academy last winter by the trustees of the late Miss M. A. Driver. The purchaser is Councillor Koppel, of Berlin, and the purchase price is said to be £10,000."

And as I read the last sentence I smiled, and there rose before me the image of one of the most satisfying specimens of the genus collector I have yet met (and may I meet many more!) moving quietly in his small, but exquisite, Berlin gallery. I saw him again, a white-haired old gentleman, with a heavy white moustache, dressed all in black, very hospitable and friendly to the stranger, bringing the magnifying glass for me the better to discern the very Vermeerish figures which Adrian Van de Velde (or why not Van der Heyden himself?) inserted in a Van der Heyden street scene, perhaps the best example in existence, beyond even those at Hertford House; referring to a notebook for the history of this picture and that; gently murmuring extolling phrases in soothing broken English as we paused before his masterpieces one by one; pointing out the best angle from which to see each; and all the while himself so perceptibly happy to be again admiring what he had admired so often before, and will, I hope, be spared to admire for many years yet.

It is a small room built for its purpose and given wholly to the few but fitting, with a table in the

midst laden with books on painting. Sitting here now, with my eyes tightly closed, I find I can reconstruct most of each wall, which says more for the force of their owner's personality than many sentences could, for it is only because he was there too, with his lulling phrases of enthusiasm, that I have the scene so clear. You enter to Rembrandt, on the right of the door in the end wall being a portrait, of the old giant himself, late in life, when the stress of it all had begun to tell, and on the left a landscape, tiny in size, but vast in effect, two small portraits, and the very beautiful "Christ and the Woman of Samaria," with a fine burst of sky above them. On the right wall is a Nicholas Maes, of a quality equal to the great Ryks "Prayer," but not a fourth its size; a tiny Paul Potter, which one would not exchange for a herd of his Hague "Bulls"; a green mound with a fringe of trees on it washed with something very like an Albert Cuyp light; and a Jacob Ruysdael "paysage": a road between a canal and a wood, with light through the branches, and more foretastes of Barbizon than often gathered in a seventeenth-century canvas.

The large portrait in the centre of this wall (each has one) is a Mierevelt: a Dutch lady in black with a ruff; and soon after we are before that glancing brilliant thing, the Van der Heyden, a painter whose special joy and triumph it was to transmute bricks and mortar to jewels. After the Van der Heyden I am a little misty among peasants. Jan Steen,

Ostade, and Teniers I remember, though not too distinctly; and then comes the great Hals with a commanding portrait of a woman, the head not so miraculously done as in some, but a left hand with gloves in it that is nearer magic than craftsmanship. Again I am a little misty, this time amid landscapes; I remember only vaguely another Ruysdael, not so good as the last, an Aert Van der Neer, a becalmed sea by Van der Goyen, a Cuyp, a Wouwermans battlepiece, and then everything is vivid again before one of the most glorious Van Dycks in existence — a countess from Genoa — painted during his Italian period, rich and sympathetic and profound. Above it is a child by Rubens; but where the new Rubens is to go — if, indeed, it is meant for this room — I cannot imagine. It is surely too large, too restless. This room is for placid work.

And why did I smile when I read the paragraph? Because I remembered the whisper in which Councillor Koppel informed me, not without a twinkle, that nearly every picture in his collection came from England. And now another! Well, he is almost the only foreigner to whom I would not grudge them, for he has a heart for painting.

The Jolly Good Fellows

FINDING myself alone in London one night recently, I wandered into a large and exclusively English restaurant not far from the juncture of Kingsway and Holborn; and there I lingered long over a very late dinner or early supper, while one by one the other guests vanished. A time came when I realized that save for the waiters I had the place to myself — a condition of things which suited the somewhat anti-social brooding mood into which I had fallen, when suddenly the muffled strains of a familiar chant took my ear, and I was aware that at a banquet in one of the many large private dining-rooms of the building one of the company was being toasted, and all the other guests were on their feet singing to the prescribed tune the form of words prescribed for such occasions. Every one knows it.

The sound brought the scene before me as vividly almost as if I were there. I could see the honoured guest sitting a little confused under the compliment, its cloying sweetness so long and embarrassingly

drawn out. I fancied him not quite knowing where to look, toying with a fork or his cigar as some kind of solace or support; while the others, each holding a glass, roared out this almost national anthem, beaming upon him as they did so, or laughingly catching each other's eyes.

So I saw the scene first, considering the recipient of the honour a novice and rather proud of his popularity; but then it occurred to me that he might be no novice at all but one inured to the flattery — it might have been his portion for years, for there is something chronic about jolly good fellowship — and so far from faltering beneath the unction, he might be criticising a fancied want of cordiality and comparing the occasion with others to its disadvantage; might even under his brows be detecting here and there a silent mouth or a satirical glint in an eye; might be appraising too curiously the volume of sound, or speculating on which of the singers — all inferior men to himself — was, by being the next guest so honoured, to diminish the homage, until, as the evening wore on and the compliment had been too often repeated, it would have sunk to a mere perfunctory ritual. (He, however, was the first.)

And I wondered a little, too, as to who began this particular song, for such things are always the work of one man. Occasionally, I remembered, the proposer of the toast himself gives the signal for musical honours (as they are called), but more often

it is some warm-blooded, impulsive fellow among the crowd. I seemed to see him — one of the confident men with a voice full of assurance whom in one's looser moments one envies so — holding up his hand and beginning the long first note, "Fo-o-o-r," and the others gradually joining in with "he's a jolly good fellow," and launching the litany once more into being. And was there ever a case, I wondered, where the rest of the company had refused to join in? and if so, how did the initiator bear it? Do such men feel affronts? To me, who can be daunted by the smile of a total stranger in the street (and he probably thinking of something else), this is an interesting question. And as I reached this point in my idle thoughts, once again the chant sounded, and I realized that already the honour had begun to lose its fine edge. There was danger that the place was about to be overdone with jolly good fellows.

Thus sitting there, all alone in my solitude, I went on to wonder what it means to be a jolly good fellow: how they do it: what alterations in one's own speech and habits, for example, would be necessary before one also could become a target for this festive concerto. Must not one be rather underlined, rather powerful, certainly no friend to anonymity? And with one's preference for individual treatment and dislike of generalizing conventions, should one like it if it did happen? All men being different, there seemed to be something wrong about so universal and undiscriminating a

form of compliment; but perhaps the jolly good fellows are all alike.

My thoughts wandered on to the jolly good fellows' wives. Were they jolly too? And good? Would they be proud and happy when their husbands told them the news of to-night's triumph, or would they have still another problem to solve as to the incomprehensible nature of man? Or would they forestall the news by sarcastic comment: "Well, I suppose you were the usual jolly good fellow again? It's not so difficult at public dinners as at home, is it?"

And I wondered, too, if there were any men in the room near me who had long nourished the ambition to be sung at like this, but could never contrive to be jolly enough; or at any rate who lacked some quality – perhaps influence — to procure the ecstasy. There may be men — so little we know of each other – who have died lamenting the loss of this manifestation of success. There may be generous creatures who have begun these musical honours — sounded the first note tentatively or with confidence — for scores and scores of fellow-diners, and by their very generosity (for it is an obliterating quality) have been themselves overlooked all their lives. While I continued idly to sit there, and the real supping parties were beginning to enter, I was conscious that the public dinner whose vocal quality had given rise to all these thoughts and speculations was by no means the only one then proceeding in this great

building. The notes of the same chant were reaching me more or less distinctly from crowded tables in two other banqueting rooms; and I paid my bill and emerged into the street stunned by the realization of how many jolly good fellows the world contains, and how fair a lot to fill is left to each man still, and the question, Would I really try to be one also?

Thoughts on Magic

I WAS present the other day at one of those discussions on conjuring which everybody must know. One of the party had just seen a conjurer and had been perplexed by a trick. He first described the trick, and then we suggested different ways in which it might have been done, of all of which he was scornful. At last he was asked if, then, he considered the conjurer a real wizard employing actual magic? He disclaimed any frame of mind so absurd; but as a matter of fact, that is what he wanted to think, and that is what we all want to think when we see a conjurer, and ever shall want. For magic is poor human nature's dearest desire.

Old people know it is not for them; middle-aged people suspect sadly it is not for them; but children — and so many of us are always children — long for it hopefully. A ban on fairy-tales would, of course, be powerful to check such a longing; but nothing could wholly eradicate it. In my early days I was divided as to what magical thing I most wanted — whether it was a packet of fern-seed to make me

invisible, or a purse that always had money in it, or a flying carpet. Then I came across the wishing-cap, and, of course, fixed upon that, because one could then wish for invisibility, or wealth, or travel, at will.

Yet even as a child I remember feeling that there was something a little too wholesale about this cap. It did too much. I contrasted it with that commoner apparatus of the fairy-tale, the article which confers three wishes only, and I decided, with a fumbling towards the truer romance, that thus to limit the ambition was both more just and more interesting. Yet there again I always found myself wondering why the first wish was not for a wishing-cap; and indeed the folly of the wishers in all the stories of the three wishes is perhaps many a child's first glimpse of real miserable misfortune, beyond any of the more cunningly-manufactured material, such as *Misunderstood* and similar narratives. I can still recall the fury I felt that such a gift should have been entrusted to those stupid peasants whose first wish (by the wife) was for a ladle, the second (by the angry husband) that it might stick in her mouth, and the third (by the wife) that it might be extracted again. That such a chance should have come and have been so wasted desolated me more than any aggregation of Sophoclean disasters could have done. This was tragedy, if you like.

Wishing was probably never better managed than in "The Tinder Box," always my favourite fairy-

story. That was my choicest hero for many years — the soldier home from the wars who, when he struck the flint which gave him what he wanted, always wanted the right thing. He made no mistakes.

Thinking it over, I find that I never unreservedly accepted magic. I liked it only when I liked it. Scepticism was just round the corner. For example, I liked fern-seed, and caps or cloaks of invisibility, and I liked bottomless purses (immensely); but I did not like seven-league boots. I could understand vaguely but sufficiently those other lenitives of a drab life; but I could not understand seven-league boots. I could not see how one's legs could stretch so far, irrespective of foot-gear. Seven leagues, I discovered, were twenty-one miles, the distance from Dover to Calais, and it bothered me. I wondered to a point of desperation how one reached a place that was, say, only five leagues away. Could one take a short step? These little worries irritated me, although I accepted Perseus's winged sandals quite naturally.

The only blot on "The Tinder Box," which I consider the best comic fairy-story ever written, was the size of the dogs' eyes. These were just ordinary dogs, capable of being lifted and seated on an old woman's apron, and yet the eyes of one were as big as saucers, of another mill-wheels, and of the third towers — meaning, I suppose, the tops of circular towers. That description came perilously near ruining it for me; but the rest saved it. Still I do not

absolve Andersen from a blemish. It is perhaps the only one in all his adorable pages. "Cinderella," which is of course the best fairy-tale of all, perfect in ingredients, perfect in arrangement, and perfect in its end, has no such fault. I could believe every word of it; and then "Cinderella" has tenderness too, whereas "The Tinder Box" is all farce and swagger. But how good!

I am writing of feelings that are past. To meet with the supernatural in any form whatever in a novel of to-day causes me to lay down the book — unless, of course, Mr. Anstey is the author. The others — the serious ones — who revive the dead, or transfuse blood and personality, or accumulate ghosts, or visit the future, or converse with spirits — these I send back to the library by return of post. I am too old for any magic but the magic of Nature: the magic, for instance, that educes a flaming hollyhock eight feet high from a little, dry, dark chip in a penny packet, and from a speckled blue and black egg an inch long calls forth a bird which sings divinely through the April rain. But I still think "The Tinder Box" one of the best stories in the world.

Tom Girtin

A DEALER (the story runs), calling one morning in a hackney coach on Turner, and looking over the works in his studio, said, "These are very fine, Mr. Turner, but I have brought something finer with me." "I don't know what that can be," was the reply, "unless it's Tom Girtin's 'White House at Chelsea.'"

And again, long after, the same painter, who survived Girtin by forty-nine years and left an immense fortune, was heard to remark, "Had Girtin lived I should have starved"; while Constable used to say that the study of thirty Girtin drawings lent to him by Sir George Beaumont completely changed the trend of his genius.

And who was the candid, powerful, innovating young hand of whom these masters spoke? Thomas Girtin, the son of a Southwark ropemaker, was born on February 18th, in 1775, eight days after Charles Lamb. His first master was Edward Dayes, a water-colour painter and engraver, who practised all his life that blue-grey tinting which Girtin and Turner began with, but soon abandoned. Dayes, a dis-

agreeable man but fine artist (a perfectly possible combination), had a short way with apprentices who showed signs of revolt, and Girtin found himself in the Fleet for breaking his indentures. There he covered his walls with sketches which the Earl of Essex chanced to see, and his lordship procured the boy's release both from prison and from Dayes. Girtin next associated himself with a genial and convivial painter and engraver named John Raphael Smith, in whose studio he found a promising, although somewhat anti-social, youth of his own age named Turner, the son of a Maiden Lane barber. English artists no longer have such humble beginnings as these twain, but they do not, it is thought, paint any the better for it. Together the boys tinted Smith's mezzotints: while under Smith it is possible, too, that Girtin learned that life was not wholly devoid of beer and skittles.

Few cities — probably none — are visited by such industrious and enthusiastic hero-worshippers as London, tireless in their desire to stand reverently in historic spots and gaze with awe and rapture upon the abodes of great men. But who has ever seen a knot of admirers, or even a rapt individual, before No. 8 Adelphi Terrace? Yet it was there that Dr. Thomas Monro lived, and it was Monro who was the principal encourager of the young water-colourists of that day — from Cozens to Cotman — not only giving them the good supper they probably only too badly needed, but a few shillings

besides, together with stimulating counsel and the opportunity to copy great masters.

Monro was on the staff of Bethlehem Hospital, and when poor Cozens, who among their predecessors had most of the divine fire which Girtin and Turner were to tend, went mad, the Doctor cared for him; while he not only gathered young men about him at No. 8, but took them on sketching excursions around London. Altogether, for his services to British water-colour painting he deserves a statue of gold in the Victoria and Albert Museum; but he does not possess one. There is not even a tablet on his house.

But Monro did not exhaust the stimulating influence of Adelphi Terrace, for next door lived John Henderson, who also had taste and the sense of patronage; and to one or other of these houses, but chiefly Monro's, the two youths Girtin and Turner went, evening after evening, when their work for Smith was done, and either made original drawings, or tinted outlines, or copied from Canaletto, Gainsborough, Piranesi, or Cozens himself. Mr. Binyon considers that the influence upon both youths of the Adelphi Canalettos cannot be overestimated, and Turner, who was not often articulately grateful, later in life painted a picture in which his indebtedness to, or at any rate admiration of, the Venetian painter is recorded. Most of the British Museum Girtins and Cozens are from Henderson's collection.

When the time came to leave London Girtin fell in with a travelling antiquary and amateur artist, named James Moore, and accompanied him on various extended tours in the North. He also once went to Scotland by sea with that dangerous character, George Morland, who not only strongly objected to be sober himself but disliked his companions to be so; but there is no good evidence that Girtin did more at any time than prefer Bohemianism to staidness, and was open-handed, warm-hearted, and beloved by all who knew him — always excepting Edward Dayes.

This artistic zeal and cheery friendliness led him, in the late nineties, to establish an artists' club, the members of which met at each other's houses or lodgings, and drew, ate, and joked; among them being Cotman, Francia, later the instructor of Bonington (who was not yet born), Calcott, afterwards Sir Augustus, and Ker Porter, afterwards Sir Robert, brother of Jane Porter, who wrote *The Scottish Chiefs* and made use of some of her brother's experiences as a young artist in her *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. But Turner was not a member; his genius lay outside such sodalities; he worked alone, almost in secret, and saved his money.

Thus Girtin lived, marrying early, travelling much, always kindly, always busy, almost always inspired, changing his abode often, until his premature death, from consumption, in 1802, at the early age of twenty-seven. He was buried in St.

Paul's, Covent Garden, and Turner was at his funeral. Indeed it is said that Turner paid for his gravestone; and I hope it is true.

Of "The White House at Chelsea," which is Girtin's masterpiece, there are two versions, of which the finer, and probably the first, belongs to Mr. Micholls, who has kindly allowed me to reproduce it as the frontispiece to this book. The picture, which was epoch-making, is one of the earliest — if not quite the earliest — transcripts of the romantic beauty and mystery of the Thames, and nothing has more serenity and charm. One can understand, as one looks at the original, what Turner meant in his remark to the dealer, and how it is that English art has never been the same since it was painted. It is one of the constructive pictures: a work with no influence before it, save the desire to be true and beautiful, but enormous influences in its wake.

My Walks Abroad

I. — Ophrys apifera

I HAD always wanted to find one for myself, unaided, but I had never done so. Last year a friend led me up the slopes of Wolstonbury and turned me loose on a small area where it was known to grow, and very soon, sure enough, a specimen came to hand; but that is not the real thing. It is almost like buying a bird's egg for a collection, although of course, not really base, as that is.

Hence when suddenly, on our own hillside, thinking of something else, I saw the beautiful flower at my feet, no wonder I was excited; and I still am. It was one of the peaks of Darien that all of us cherish.

Really it is a most exquisite flower, without being too exquisite. That, of course, is the danger it runs, but it is avoided. The green of the stem is so light and radiant; the stem itself so firm and straight; the blossoms are set on it with such proud distinction; the purple of the petal is so gay and pure and

rare. And then there is its magic and wonder too — the delightful resemblance to a bee. That there should be a bee in a flower, or on a flower, is the most natural thing possible. But that a flower should actually be a bee — that is a miracle. All flowers, of course, are miracles, but this is a miracle beyond most.

And the diversity of flowers! — here one actually is face to face with a profound and moving mystery. Why flowers were made at all: there is problem enough there for the most avid inquirer, particularly as the solution must ever escape him; and then why flowers were made in such variety and profusion, since were there fewer no one would miss those that had never been made. Why, for example, does my botany-book contain ten coloured plates each devoted to from five to seven kinds of wild parsley, when one wild parsley would (I imagine) do?

Flowers, I take it (using as much human reasoning power as was allotted me), were made either to gladden the eye of man and make him more contented with the earth, or as medicines and fodder, or to provide bees with honey, or perhaps for all these purposes. What amount of honey the *Ophrys apifera* yields I have no notion; but there is something very charming in the idea of Flora reproducing in vegetable form this little industrious friend and ally of hers — fixing him for ever on the stalk of this shy, distinguished plant, just as a Japanese artist sets a mother-of-pearl butterfly on a screen: so that

if at any time, by some dreadful and unthinkable calamity, all the hives were destroyed and every drone and worker in the world exterminated, we might still be charmingly informed as to what they were like by hunting (as I have been doing every day for a fortnight) on the thymy slopes of a chalk down until we found a bee-orchis.

For you must not believe the papers — they were at it again the other day, after the Holland House show — when they pretend that the only orchid-hunting that has any romance or excitement in it is that in the tropics, as described so vividly by Mr. Frederick Boyle. The English orchid-hunter may not run the risks of swamp-fever and snake-bites, nor, happily, will his efforts yield such golden returns; but everything else he has — the pleasure of the chase, the rapture of the find, the adventures by the way, and, above all, England.

I once had an Uncle Charles, who belonged to the old school of naturalists and sportsmen — that is to say, what he owned in the way of specimens he had obtained unaided save by his own eyes, his own legs, his own hands, his own gun, or his own dog. A bachelor, he had time for such pursuits, and his rooms were lined with cases of birds, and his head was stored with the knowledge of the field and the wood. Among other things that he knew was the home of the rarer wild flowers of Sussex. But do you think he would tell anyone? Not he. The man-orchis, the fly-orchis, the butterfly-orchis, the frog-orchis, the bee-orchis

— he had a *cache* of each kind in his memory and could go straight to the spot at the right time. But he would not tell. "No," he would say, "that's my secret. But I will make an exception in your favour. I will tell you more than I ever told anyone else. I get out at Balcombe Station." Somewhat in this way do I intend to address inquirers who ply me too narrowly as to the habitat of the bee-orchis. Such secrets must be kept.

II. — The Bats

(*Written in February*)

There is a street in London called Cranbourn Street, which serves no particular purpose of its own, but is useful as leading from Long Acre and Garrick Street to the frivolous delights of the Hippodrome, and serviceable also in the possession of a Tube station from which one may go to districts of London as diverse as Golder's Green and Hammersmith. These to the ordinary eye are the principal merits of Cranbourn Street. But, to the eye which more minutely discerns, it has deeper and finer riches: it has a shop window with a little row of cricket bats in it so discreetly chosen that they not only form a vivid sketch of the history of the greatest of games but enable anyone standing at the window and studying them to defeat for the

moment the attack of the dreariest of weather and for a brief but glorious space believe in the sun again.

And what of the treasures? Well, to begin with, the oldest known bat is here — a dark lop-sided club such as you see in the early pictures in the pavilion of Lord's, that art gallery which almost justifies rain during a match, since it is only when rain falls that one examines it with any care. Of this bat there is obviously no history, or it would be written upon it, and the fancy is therefore free to place it in whatever hands one will — Tom Walker's, or Beldham's, or Lord Frederick Beauclerk's, or even Richard Nyren's himself, father of the first great eulogist of the game. Beside it is another veteran, not quite so old, though, and approaching in shape the bat of our own day — such a bat as Lambert, or that dauntless sportsman, Mr. Osbaldiston ("The Squire," as he was known in the hunting-field), may have swung in one of their famous single-wicket contests.

Beside these is even more of a curiosity. Nothing less than the very bat which during his brief and not too glorious cricket career was employed to defend his wicket, if not actually to make runs, by the late King Edward VII when he was Prince of Wales. For that otherwise accomplished ruler and full man (as the old phrase has it) was never much of a C. B. Fry. He knew the world as few have known it; he commanded respect and affection; he was accustomed to give orders and have them

instantly obeyed; but almost anyone could bowl him out, and it is on record that those royal hands, so capable in their grasp of orb and sceptre, had only the most rudimentary and incomplete idea of retaining a catch. Such are human limitations! Here, however, in the Cranbourn Street window, is His Majesty's bat, and even without the accompanying label one would guess that it was the property of no very efficient cricketer. For it lacks body; no one who really knew would have borne to the pitch a blade so obviously incapable of getting the ball to the ropes; while just beneath the too fanciful splice is a silver plate. Now all cricketers are aware that it is when the incoming man carries a bat with a silver plate on it that the scorers (if ever) feel entitled to dip below the table for the bottle and glass and generally relax a little.

So much for what may be called the freaks of this fascinating window. Now for the facts. A very striking fact indeed is the splintered bat with which Mr. G. L. Jessop made a trifle of 168 against Lancashire. I wish the date was given; I wish even more that the length of the innings in minutes was given. Whether the splinters were lost then, or later, we should also be told. But there it is, and, after seeing it, how to get through these infernal months of February and March and April and half May, until real life begins again, one doesn't know and can hardly conjecture. And what do you think is beside it? Nothing less than "the best bat" that Mr.

M. A. Noble ever played with — the leisurely, watchful Australian master, astute captain, inspired change-bowler, and the steady, remorseless compiler of scores at the right time. It is something to have in darkest February Noble's best bat beneath one's eyes.

And lastly, there is a scarred and discoloured blade which bears the brave news that with it did that old man hirsute, now on great match-days a landmark in the Lord's pavilion, surveying the turf where once he ruled, — "W. G." himself, no less, — make over a thousand runs. Historic wood, if you like; historic window!

No wonder, then, that I scheme to get Cranbourn Street into my London peregrinations. For here is youth renewed and the dismallest of winters momentarily slain.

III. — Entente

Certain London streets even in one's own district one never uses; and eminent, in my case, among these is that one, to me nameless, which runs parallel with St. Martin's Lane, a little to the eastward. It has a cheap printer's at one end, opposite an eye hospital, and it runs away into small shops and model dwellings.

Well, I chanced to be there the other night taking a short cut from St. Martin's Lane to the Strand, and found myself in a little crowd surrounding a large, brilliantly lighted motor-car. Why the crowd waited, I did not know or ask; it was enough to make one of them and wait too, for that is life. And then, after a minute or so, from the Coliseum stage-door, which I observed for the first time, emerged a polite foreign gentleman in evening dress followed by a volatile foreign lady with a mass of dark red hair and strong, animated features. The little crowd palpitated and cheered, and the bolder ones among us said, "Bong swaw," or "Veev Sahrah."

While the famous lady was smiling and bowing and waving her hand, and the gentleman was looking self-effacing, and the chauffeur was putting his deadly machinery into working order, I walked on, and at the corner, between the cheap printer's and the eye hospital, stood a costermonger with a barrow of apples. I reached him just at the moment when the motor-car, illuminated like an excursion steamer, passed Being a gallant creature and accustomed to the time-table of tragédiennes, he barely looked up from the sale of two Ribstons as he called out in a hearty London voice, "Good night, Sarah!" and again was immersed in trade. "Sarah Burnhard," he explained to his perplexed customer.

IV. — The Good Major

Every now and then one's eyes alight upon something which emphasizes the death of the past with disconcerting vividness.

Turning recently into Shepherd's Gallery in King Street to see what English masters had been assembled in those rooms sacred to Gainsborough and Constable, Reynolds, Romney, Bonington, and the other great men of the late seventeen hundreds and early eighteens, I was immensely tickled by a mediocre canvas belonging to, say, 1770. It depicted an elderly gentleman of benevolent aspect, in a wig, knee-breeches, and white silk stockings, seated at a table with an open book in his hand. Behind and about him were spinning-wheels, bundles of flax, and so forth, and before him three small children — the first a boy on his knees in an attitude of prayer, the second a girl in a neat mob-cap, standing, and lastly a very minute person indeed hiding behind the girl. Judged as a work of art, the picture had no merits whatever; it was merely a painted record. But as a human document it was priceless, while as a reminder of the flight of time and change of fashions it could not well be more striking; for how do you think the title of it ran — painted boldly on a wooden label fixed to the top of the frame? It ran thus: "Major Brooke instructing the Children of the Sunday School and School of Industry

in Bath in the First Principles of the Christian Religion."

Impossible to conceive of such a picture being painted to-day. Not that we have not equally bad artists or equally good majors; but our bad artists choose other subjects, and our good majors leave the inculcation of the First Principles of the Christian Religion into other people's children to other people. Nor are they any longer quite so confident as to what the First Principles of the Christian Religion are. But Major Brooke — amiable dodo! — he had no doubts.

V. — The Rogues

Artists in fraud are always with us, but it is unusual to meet with three good examples in one week. Yet I have just done so. I had drifted into a billiard saloon in the West Central district, where there are many tables, including French ones without pockets, and I noticed two men playing. Their game was indifferent, but they themselves were so difficult to place that I was interested. Not bookmakers and not dealers of any kind, but a type, distinctly Hebraic, between those callings. They were carefully dressed, but very common, and they had both time and money, for here they were idling as early as half-past four.

They left before I did; and passing out soon afterwards into a busy street I found myself looking into one of those shops from which the windows and door have been removed in order that sales by auction may be the more easily carried on in them. The auctioneer was shouting in the rostrum, and behold he was one of the billiard players! Pictures, busts, watches, jewellery and ornaments were the stock, and a gaudy pair of vases was being put up. There was hesitation in bidding, and at last a voice offered five shillings. After a few languid bids the vases were knocked down to this speculator, whom I could not see, for a pound.

"Some people think these sales are not genuine," the auctioneer said, "but I give you my word they are. Some say that these bids are made by our own friends, just to encourage the others; but it is untrue. You, sir," he added, turning to the successful bidder, "you have never seen me before, have you?"

We all looked toward the gentleman in question, and a displacement of heads permitted me to see him clearly.

"You've never seen me before, have you, sir?" the auctioneer inquired again.

"Never," said the man.

It was the other player in the game of billiards.

That was on a Thursday. The next day I met by chance an old acquaintance, in whose curiosity-shop in the seaside town that I was now visiting

again I had, twenty and more years ago, spent far too much time, drawn thither partly by a natural leaning towards pictures and books and pottery and all the other odds and ends which come from every corner of the earth and all ages to make up the stock-in-trade of such places, but more by the personality of the dealer. Nominally he was a goldsmith and jeweller, as every great artist in Italy used to be, but actually he was an amusing loafer. He sat at a little vice, with a file in his hand, and did nothing but talk. He passed his fingers through his bushy iron-grey locks, glanced at the reflection of his bright eyes and ruddy cheeks in the mirror — there was always a mirror — and talked. His pet illusion was that he was Byronic. He had for revealed religion a scorn which he thought Byronic, although it was really of the brand of Foote and Taxil; he had for the moral code a contempt which he thought Byronic, although it was merely the most ordinary self-indulgence. But Byron having been loose in such matters, he was looser with a greater courage. He had a mischievous, sardonic view of the world which he thought was Byronic, but which was quite genuine and belonged to his nature. Nothing gave him so much pleasure as to watch the swindlers of his secondary profession at work. We used to discuss poetry and painting, but above all the riddle of life, and on his part always destructively. It was a very school for cynicism, this little shop, where nothing, so far as I knew, was

ever sold and I was the only habitué. He had an adopted niece, aged about seven — a pert, pretty little creature whom he spoiled utterly; he had a complaining wife who had no patience with his treatment of his niece, his Byronic airs, his verbose sloth or his prevailing gaiety, and affected none. He also had a retinue of complacent servant-girls whom his tropes and flashy theories delighted.

Such was my Byronic friend in 1887 to about 1890; and I must confess not often to have thought of him since; and then last week, on this flying visit to my old town, I saw him again. He was bending over a portfolio, but I knew his back at once. His hair had become white and a little thinner; but everything else was the same: the ruddy cheek, the sparkling eye, always lighting up at the originality of some world-old denial or affirmation, the Byronic open collar, the Byronic necktie. He did not recognize me at first; but instantly afterwards we resumed the intercourse of twenty years before; although now it was I who was the older, not he. With him time had stood still. The only change in his talk was a tinge of embitterment, not that he had failed financially, but that his friends had left him. The complaining wife was dead, nor did his references to her dim his brilliant orbs; but his adopted niece — it was her and her husband's hostility to himself that he found such a pill. The old burden, "After all I had done, too," rolled out once more, that phrase which summarizes so much

of man's dealings with man and perhaps more of woman's dealing with woman.

He soon checked himself, however, remembering my ancient tastes, and clutched my arm. "What a world!" he chuckled, — "what a world! I'll show you something — something to interest you. It's not far," and he pulled me along to the window of an old picture-shop. "Hush," he said, "be careful: walls have ears; but just look at that painting there, that portrait. What do you make of that?"

It was a woman's face, obviously eighteenth century, of the period, say, of Ramsay and Reynolds. She glimmered at us through layers of grime and blister. "When do you think that was painted?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't know," I said. "1780 perhaps."

He doubled himself up with wicked joy. "What a world!" he exclaimed. "Three weeks ago! What a world!"

"Nonsense!" I replied.

"Truth," he said. "I know the painter."

He again pulled my sleeve and we retired to a passage. He looked fearfully round and drew from his pocket a creased page of a magazine. It was an art magazine of recent date, and the plate represented another eighteenth-century lady. Underneath was printed "Newly discovered Romney."

He leaned against the wall and squirmed. "Same man," he gurgled at last. "Same man. I watched him paint it. What a world! Lord, I don't want to die yet!"

A "Fun City"

VI. — The Princess and Men

I was in Oxford Street, drifting slowly towards an appointment, when the dismal words "Fun City," in large letters, caught the eye over some derelict premises. Oxford Street is ordinarily so consistently businesslike and in earnest that I thought I might as well examine this frivolous stock-in-trade as any other, even though long experience has taught me how little the promise contains; and in I went. You know what "Fun Cities" are: penny-in-the-slot machines, living photographs, fortune-tellers, football matches, try-your-strengths, and gramophones; ninepins, ring-throwing, cocoanuts, sweet stalls; with a few more elaborate side-shows, all at a penny, those in this particular one comprising a forlorn negro champion disarrayed for boxing a lean and dispirited white champion; a company of dwarfs; a palmist; and a troupe of wrestlers. All were to perform for a penny behind their grimy curtains, and iron throats were shouting the glad news.

I was coming out in a state of dismay induced by so much noise and negligibleness when another metal larynx urged upon me the duty of seeing "the most beautiful girl on earth," who was not only that rare thing, but also "a picture gallery in herself" — the Princess Cristina, in short — and, looking up, I saw a poster of a tattooed lady, fortified by photographs which brought in the evidence of the

truthful camera and suggested that, for once, the poster artist had not gone much farther than fact. This was an interesting discovery; but there was something in these pictures of the tattooed lady's face, apart (I swear) from her eventful epidermis, which made its appeal — a touch of wistfulness and not a little grace — and, the entrance fee being within my means, I paid it. and found myself among a dozen men, who had, of course, been urged thither by precisely similar motives.

The Princess herself was on the platform, shivering under an overcoat, waiting to begin, which she could not do until the metal larynx was mercifully mute. She stood motionless, looking at nothing, and the camera had not lied. Or, if it had, it was on the other side, for she was more attractive than it stated. Her features were delicate and regular; her mouth noticeably well cut, although her lips were perhaps a shade too thin; her eyes were at once candid and melancholy. The larynx stopping, she got to work instantly; stripped off her overcoat, revealing bare chest and arms, very shapely; and, in a Cockney accent with a transatlantic hint, began her speech of introduction.

Her shoulders, arms, and what could be seen of her bosom were wholly covered with those blue-and-red designs that appeal to tattooers and tattooed and to no one else; dragons, ships, intertwined flags, true love knots, daggers, snakes, Buffalo Bill's head. These, one by one, she pointed to and ex-

plained, with a mirthless humour and that want both of real shame and false shame which can so astonish and abash the onlooker, calling us impartially "boys" the while, and never looking at anyone individually. The glories of the upper regions having been exhibited, "Now, boys," she said, "I'm going to give you a treat," and proceeded to disclose her legs, which turned out to have practically the same patterns as the rest of her.

But it was not the tattooing that was interesting; it was herself. She was so utterly a machine — so detached and disinterested, and, as I say, mirthless, her wistful, sophisticated eyes never lighting to her tongue, and never caring to investigate a single spectator's face. Years of public exhibition, together with the facetious or familiar comments of certain units of the many knots before her, had done their work, and men to her were men in a special sense of the word. I will not say enemies, but necessary evils: foolish, inquisitive creatures who had got to be kept their distance, and, while entertained, repelled. Watching her, one had the feeling that she was by far the best thing there. Watching here, high on her little platform, above us all, unique in the possession of these trumpery indigo markings (no doubt inflicted upon her early in youth by foresighted parents), the promise of displaying which had brought day after day, year after year, in the New World equally with the Old (for the tattooer obviously had worked with a cosmopolitan eye),

these curious little crowds of which I now made one, I realized suddenly what the prevailing expression on those refined features was. It was contempt. The Princess had summed us up; she knew men through and through; and if there were any exceptions (which was unlikely), was too clever to admit it. For the really clever people never admit exceptions: they generalize and succeed.

Any doubt there might be on this score disappeared later; for she produced a bundle of sealed envelopes, which, from the nature of their contents, might not, she said, be sold to ladies, and must not be opened inside the building; and these she offered at a penny each with a portrait of herself thrown in. We all paid our pennies and filed out, eager, as the pretty, tired, and very chilly Princess knew, to discover as quickly as possible, unobserved by each other, what we had got. . . .

My envelope contained a piece of paper bearing these words: "Great respect from everybody do persons get that are born on this day; they are open-minded, intelligent, and thoughtful, make good friends and partners, are very loving to the opposite sex."

VII. — The Hofbrauhaus

"Do you never look at anything but pictures when you go abroad?" I was once asked. The

question no doubt I brought on myself; and yet there ought, by this time, to be a certain weight of evidence in the other direction. At Munich, for example, one refreshes oneself for the next day's visit to the Pinakothek by sitting quietly at a place of entertainment watching the living Bavarian at his pleasures. The good Karl Baedeker makes you. On no account, he says, should one miss the Hofbrauhaus; and although it is permissible to look upon some of his instructions as counsels of perfection, this at any rate I obeyed. The only difficulty about the Hofbrauhaus is finding it, for it is hidden away on the Platen, a street in Munich which leads nowhere and to which, in spite of the presence of this palace of conviviality, no other street seems to lead, except by accident. In fact, it is quite easy to overlook the Hofbrauhaus altogether, and to leave Munich, after weeks of toilsome adventure, under the impression that one has seen all, totally unconscious that all the time some half the population of that city, day and night, have been comfortably seated within the Hofbrauhaus walls, not only hidden thereby from one's gaze, but concealed even more completely in other ways, their bodies being invisible in smoke and their faces submerged in their mugs.

I have great difficulty in describing this resort, because we have nothing like it. But I can do something. Think of the largest building you were ever in. Then double it. Give it three floors, and fill it with tobacco smoke. Now you have a rough

notion of the Hofbrauhaus. It is as though one entered the Hotel Cecil (shall I say?), and on opening the door found oneself peering into the dark recesses of a hall measureless to man, in which sat thousands of artisans drinking beer; and then climbed a staircase and found smaller rooms filled in the same way; and then climbed again and opened another door and found another room like the first, only higher and brighter, where the middle classes, also in their thousands, or even possibly millions, sat smoking and chattering and drinking beer and then more beer.

If that flight of fancy does not help you to visualize the Hofbrauhaus, I would add the counsel to imagine one of Ostade's tavern scenes modernized as to costume and multiplied to infinity. One difference, however, between the old roisterer and the new is that the old roisterer seems to have got very drunk, and to have preferred an inverted barrel for his table, whereas the new roisterer, as he is to be observed at the Hofbrauhaus, sits in tightly jammed rows at long tables, as though he were a director, and sends pint after pint pursuing each other through his astounding system, with his daughter on one side of him, and his wife on the other, and his old mother, maybe, opposite.

For it is a family resort, this Hofbrauhaus; it is both hearth and club and mahogany tree. It is also a concert-room; for on one of the nights that I visited it I had to pay threepence admission, in

order to make one of the millions who listened in rapture and perfect silence to the strains of a violin which emerged ravishingly from the smoky profound. In the intervals of the music I set out to count the mugs which my neighbours were emptying, but the task was too great, and I turned rather to the consideration of the differences between the Münchener and the Londoner, which make it possible for the one to spend his evenings quietly, if extravagantly, thus, with his family about him, and a boundless thirst blessing the board and never disgracing it (for I saw none drunk in this city), while the other, the Londoner, in a similar position, leaving his wife and children in their home, must roam from bar to bar, fuddling his brains, and hearing nothing but gramophones or mechanical pianos whose keys are depressed by no earthly fingers.

Another difference between this temple of Gambrinus and our own drinking-places is that the Hofbrauhaus has one tap only — the Hofbrau. If you do not like it, you stay away; if you do like it, you consume it inordinately. It is brought by quick little women, far liker old and trusted domestic servants than the barmaids of Albion. Long may they flourish, these efficient and active Hebes! Long may they make it an easy thing for forty thousand Bavarians to drink as one!

Unlikely Conversations

I. — The New Gaol

THE Governor received me with that dignified courtesy which has ever gone with the control of such institutions. "I think," he said, "you will agree that it is well conducted."

He took a huge bunch of keys from its nail and led the way.

"Here," he said, unlocking a cell, "is a very old offender."

I peered into the gloom and saw an Aberdeen terrier in the corner. Naughtiness was written all over him.

"Sandy's his name," said the Governor. "A destructive maniac. He tears up everything he sees — clothes, papers, work-bags, carpets, hearth-rugs, even books. His last offence was to chew a presentation copy of Bryce's *American Constitution*. He is here for a week. We cover articles with eau-de-Cologne, whisky, and tobacco-juice to disgust him."

In the next cell was a bulldog.

"Disobedience," said the Governor. "Won't go out for walks without a lead, and then pulls at it like a salmon. We fasten him to a crank, and he has to trot with it or be half choked for hours."

In the next was a little black spaniel.

"Refuses to be broken to the house," said the Governor. "A stubborn case. Otherwise a charming character. Systematic lashings regularly was the sentence."

"Do you find that punishment is a deterrent?" I asked.

"Undoubtedly," he said; "but they learn slowly. One sojourn here is rarely enough. Here, for example, is a frequent visitor," and he showed me an Irish terrier. "A cat-worrier. We deal with him by pushing stuffed cats charged with electricity into his cell. In the way they cure crib-biters, you know. But his spirit is stronger than his sense of pain."

"Good dog?" I involuntarily said.

The Governor was scandalized, and led me away. "Had I known you would so forget yourself," he said, "I should have refused you the interview."

II. — Puck superseded

He was in the opposite corner to me and for a while he read his paper. Then he looked out of the

window, and then he began a furtive examination of myself and my belongings in that offensive way which one's fellow-passengers so often and so irritatingly employ. At last, after many false starts, he spoke to me.

"You rarely travel abroad?" he said inquiringly.

"Very rarely," I replied. "But what makes you think so?"

"Your bag," he said. "It has no foreign labels on it."

I perhaps showed surprise at his acumen, for he continued, very knowingly, in a half-whisper, leaning towards me, "But the converse isn't always true, you know."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Why, it doesn't necessarily follow that because a bag is covered with foreign labels its owner has travelled abroad. For instance," he added, with a cunning look, drawing from his pocket an envelope, "I could furnish you with a complete Swiss and Italian route in two minutes, if you'd allow me;" and he spread before me a series of hotel labels ranging from Lucerne to Rome.

"So you mean that you deal in these things?" I asked in astonishment.

"I do indeed," he said. "My business is to turn the untravelled into travellers. There are lots of gentlemen who spend their holidays very quietly at home, after giving it out that they are going, say, to Nuremberg. Well, for half a crown I provide them

with a good Nuremberg hotel label, and no one is the wiser — unless, of course, they are cross-examined too severely by one who knows that city. Young couples in the suburbs are very good customers of mine. There is a lot of rivalry in the suburbs about holidays, you may have noticed. Every one wants to appear a little more expensive and venturesome than every one else; but they haven't really got the money for it, poor things, so they come to me, and I plaster circumstantial evidence of Innsbrück or Interlaken or Venice or Bergen all over their trunks; and they return from Rustington, or Hythe, or wherever it is, certain of a successful winter. They work entirely for their neighbours, do the young couples; but there are lots of gentlemen who work merely for fellow-passengers in railway carriages and on platforms. It's them they want to impress. Human nature's very rum. It is through observing it that I came to take up this business.

"Then there's another customer, who really does travel, but not in the style that he wants people to believe. In reality, when, for example, he stays at Lucerne, he puts up at some little cheap place without a name; but he gets from me a Schweizerhof label and sticks that on in the train. You see?"

I asked him how much he charged.

"Well," he said, "prices vary. In August, Scotch hotel labels are dearer than in July, of course, especially in the neighbourhood of the best moors. A Swiss set of eight I can do for a pound — half a

crown apiece. The Italian set is dearer, and so on. When it comes to Russia and Greece, dearer still. India works out at about half a sovereign a label; but the big-game districts of Africa are really costly — ten pounds a label sometimes. There's not much demand for American labels, but Japans are a steady market. I've got a Japanese set here for a gentleman who pretends he's there now — a dramatic critic, I believe he is — but he's really hiding in Hertfordshire all the time. He's due back soon, and he wants the labels to look well seasoned, and so we're sticking them on to-day."

"But surely your clients must get caught out now and then?" I said.

"Not if they're careful," he replied. "You see, I'm always at hand to help them. I deal in picture-postcards of foreign parts as well as labels, and then there's guide-books, you know. No, if they get caught out it's their own fault."

The train pulling up at King's Langley, he carefully collected his stock of labels, bade me good-day, and got out.

III. — The Secret Out

For years and years it has been a mystery to me, and I have no doubt to others, where the Post Offices get their pencils — those pencils which are of such

value that they are chained to the telegraph counter like the nail-brushes at a political club not a hundred miles from Northumberland Avenue.

From what mines can such plumbago be excavated — plumbago warranted to make no mark save by intense pressure, and when intensely pressed to break? I have bought pencils at every price in retail shops, but never have I found anything like these. They are, as the dealer said, "a unique."

But now I know the secret, for I have met a public official who gave it away.

"Yes," he said, "I am a specialist in the impracticable, and as such am adviser to Government departments and railway companies. You have heard, of course, of the 'Corridor Soap' used on certain lines, the great merit of which is that it 'won't wash hands'? Well, I discovered that soap. It took me a long time, but I found it at last. I was paid a handsome commission by several leading companies for putting them up to it."

"Indeed?" said I.

"Yes," he continued, "and it was I who brought to perfection the post-office pencil. The post-office nib is mine too, made to my pattern by a well-known firm. Have you noticed the post-office blotting-paper?"

"I have," I said, with a groan.

"Ah!" he resumed, his eye gleaming, "that was a great find. That comes from France."

"From France?"

"Yes, from France. They understand bad blotting-paper there. And the post-office ink," he continued, "you might think that became thick in course of time; but it doesn't. Let me tell you a secret," and he whispered in my ear. "It begins like that! It's a kind of stirabout from the word go!"

"No!" I cried.

"I swear it," he said.

IV. — The School for Waiters

"We teach them," he said, "everything here. We guarantee to turn them out qualified to do credit to the waiter's calling. For example, to show you how thorough we are, here is our exercise-ground. That's where we teach them to walk. See, they're at it now. Not too fast, you notice, and not too springy. In fact, springiness is one of our *bêtes noires*, if I may so express myself. We have an instrument for rendering the feet flat in those cases where Nature hasn't done it. But she usually does. A wonderful woman Nature, sir.

"This room here is where the waiters' vocabulary is taught. It's a brief one, but of the highest importance. The chief work is to make them unlearn what they know. Many of our candidates come

here with quite a flow of language. Epithets for everything. But we don't allow that, of course. There's only one adjective for food, and that's 'nice,' and no man gets our certificate until he has ceased to use all the others. You may have noticed that no good waiter ever uses any other word — 'Have a nice grilled sole?' he says; 'a nice cutlet'; 'a nice chop'; 'a nice steak?' That's so, isn't it? All our doing.

"There are other phrases, too; but very few of them. We don't want to burden the men's minds. 'Coming, sir, coming,' — they have to practise that for hours. And then the stock reply to impatient customers, 'In two minutes,' — they practise that too. Some of them are very quick and get the whole vocabulary in a month or so quite perfectly. Others take longer.

"In this room," added my cicerone, "we teach them also to say quietly but effectively, after City dinners and other big gatherings, 'I'm just going now, sir,' 'I hope everything has been satisfactory, sir,' and such stimulating phrases.

"Here's the cellar. This is where we train the men in shaking bottles. You see that young fellow there — he has naturally quite a steady hand, but give him a bottle of old claret or hock and it'll be like a thick soup when he comes to pour it out. He's our best pupil, but the others become good before we've done with them. There's also a special class for pouring out wine so as to spill a little We

are very particular about that; and coffee too. We spend the utmost pains in teaching artistic coffee-spilling. Some gentlemen wouldn't know where they were if the waiters poured coffee neatly, so we have to be particular.

"This is the auditorium, as we call it, where we coach the men in not hearing customers the first time. And I think that's all."

I thanked him for his courtesy, and before leaving asked for the name of the restaurant to which his men usually went, to keep it as a reference.

"None in particular," he said; "they go to all."

V. — The Public's Privilege

"Please send the manager to me," I said.

The manager came, with the usual expression of surprised innocence and self-protectiveness.

"No, there's nothing wrong," I said. "I merely wanted to talk a little."

He inclined his head.

"Why," I said, drawing his attention to the menu, "why this large type for the NEW of peas? It is now mid-July. Would not 'peas' be enough? No one takes them out of a bottle now, surely?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Our customers expect it," he said.

"It excites them, I suppose," I said, "and thus prepares them to pay the price asked — a shilling. But why a shilling?" I continued. "Why ask a shilling for a pennyworth of peas? You ask only a penny for bread and a penny for butter, and they have to be manufactured. Peas grow."

He shrugged his shoulders again. "Peas are a luxury," he said.

"Very well," I continued, "I will grant that. The profit is no doubt just — from your point of view. But look here," and I showed him the morning paper, with an account of the glut of strawberries in London — tons and tons going begging in Covent Garden — 2d. a pound in the streets. "And now look at this," I added, and showed him in large type in the menu — "STRAWBERRIES AND CREAM, 2s."

"Why," I said, "don't you give the public the opportunity of sharing in this accident of profusion? Why not say 'Strawberries and cream, 6d.,' for example?"

"Oh no," he said, "that wouldn't do. They'd take us for a cheap and common place. Prices must be kept up."

"Then it's really the public that fix the prices?" I hazarded.

"Absolutely," he replied.

I suppose it is.

VI. — A Financier

"Yes," he said, "we were awfully stoney, but it's better now. We tided over the crisis all right."

"Do tell me how," I said. "The last time I saw you it was hopeless."

"Jenny had an inspiration," he replied. "She went to visit an old school-friend who was having a baby, and the thought came to her then."

"Well?" I said.

"Well, it's like this. If you have a baby and advertise it in the papers you get all kinds of truck sent you."

"I know," I said. "It's a regular nuisance."

"Oh, is it?" he replied. "Wait a bit. Look at these."

He handed me three tiny slips of paper. On one I read: —

"HIGGINSON. — On Wednesday, the 29th September, at 4 Wellington Road, W., the wife of Henry Noble Higginson, of twins, daughters."

On another: —

"MAYOR. — On the 2nd October, at 98 Orme Square, W., the wife of Robert Foxwell Mayor, of twins, son and daughter."

And on the third: —

"SOLLY. — On the 4th October, at 99 Richmond

Villas, W., the wife of Adolphus Solly, of triplets, sons."

"How odd!" I said, as I returned the slips. "Two twins and one triplets. That must be very unusual."

"Very," he said, "but not impossible. Not too unlikely for good art."

"Art?" I inquired.

"Of course," he answered, "all those are fakes. Inventions. But the addresses are real: friends of mine live there."

"I don't understand," I said.

"Why," he replied, "it's as plain as ninepence. These advertisements cost me six bob each, a sum which I had no difficulty in borrowing after I had explained the scheme. They go into the Press, and at once the firms that send out all the free truck begin to get to work. Here comes in the point of the twins and triplets, because the firms send twice or three times as much. Do you see? Now I'll tell you what the harvest is, down to date:—

"Seven bottles of an excellent beef extract, retail 3s. 6d. a bottle.

"Seven pieces of perfectly beautiful soap, worth 6d. a cake at least.

"Seven boxes of very superior violet powder, at say 1s.

"Seven pairs knitted socks, worth 1s. a pair.

"Twenty-one tins of assorted food for babies, at say 1s., and an odd lot of patent safety-pins and things like that. Of course some of the people only sent things

on approval, to be paid for if kept. The cheek of them! But most were free, as they ought to be."

"And what then?" I asked.

"Well, Jenny unloaded the lot on young-mother friends of hers for three pounds, or over 200 per cent. on our outlay. Brainy, isn't it?"

The Provincial Editor's Letter-Bag

I. — From the Vicar

DEAR SIR, — I have read in the current number of *The Gazette* the account of the opening of the new parish hall, and am pained and surprised to find how many excisions have been made. Surely, when one who is in a position to know everything and has some literary skill goes to the trouble to provide you with free copy, it is at once inexpedient and ungracious to abbreviate and distort.

That my own remarks on the platform should be cut short is nothing to me; but I think it very hard that the admirable little speech of our Squire (which was typed expressly for you), who altered his dinner-hour in order to come down and deliver it, should have been so heartlessly condensed. He spoke for at least ten minutes, but all that you allow him might have been said in two. This is more to be deplored than you may think, for Mr. Bamber-Guy stands to Boreham Green in the relation of wealthy parent, and it is in his power to

make or mar the parish room. It would not in the least surprise me to hear that your cavalier treatment of his address has caused him to reduce his donations.

Of Miss Pulham-Allways' singing I said, according to the duplicate copy of my MS. before me, "Her voice is both pure and resonant, and she rendered the *aria* with faultless precision and taste." I did not write this idly. The words expressed my deliberate opinion, based upon a careful study of music that has lasted many years. Moreover, Mrs. Pulham-Allways was seated next to me and was aware not only of my appreciation of her daughter's efforts but also that I was for the time being your representative. What, then, do I feel — and what must *she* feel — to read in your paper the bald statement that "Miss Pulham-Allways contributed a meritorious solo"?

It was with perfect cognizance of what I was doing that I inserted the name of the maker of the excellent bagatelle-board; but your ruthless blue pencil goes through it without a thought. I am not one — as you ought to know — who does things without a reason.

If ever a man has worn himself to the bone in a good cause and for no possible reward save the knowledge that he has done his duty, it is Mr. Pykelet, my curate. How natural and proper, then, that I should single him out for praise! But what do you do? You merely group him with half a

dozen ordinary villagers who may have lent a hand to move a table, or done something purely perfunctory, and say that they were "a willing band."

So much for sins of omission, but what of those of commission? Here we are on more serious ground. It is all very well, owing to exigencies of space, to condense a contribution, but it is a very different and graver thing to twist and change a contributor's meaning. This you have done more than once.

I wrote, for instance, very thoughtfully of Miss Larcom's voice, that no doubt with practice it would greatly improve and be a pleasure to listen to. But what do I read in your report? — "Miss Larcom aroused great and well-deserved enthusiasm by her charming *morceaux*." How do you know that? You have no right to go behind the back of your accredited critic. Can it, I wonder, be true that Miss Larcom is engaged to your advertising canvasser, as I am told is the case? If so, we have a very reprehensible suggestion of nepotism at work.

Again, I find that you say of Mr. Harry Wildmarsh's recitation that it was "received with roars of laughter." That, I regret to say, is true; but what you do not print is my opinion as to its extreme vulgarity and undesirability.

I notice that you also say that Mr. Arthur Corney had done "yeoman's service in bringing the evening to a successful issue." I am aware of no yeoman's service (whatever that means) on the part of Mr. Corney. You doubtless have private reasons of your own, but

allow me to reiterate the opinion that in such a matter as this the Vicar is more likely to be well informed of the relative value of each helper than you can possibly be.

No doubt you will reply that a column and a half is long measure for a parochial event of the kind; but permit me to inform you that this is not so. The opening of a parish room is epoch-making. Men who hitherto have been in the habit of spending their evenings in the public-house will now congregate here to engage in blameless pursuits, and nothing but good can follow. A new civic life will thus be set up, a sociability hitherto unknown in Boreham Green. Indirectly, if not directly, the very Empire must be the gainer.

I shall peruse with interest any reply that you care to send, and meanwhile I trust that some means will be found to do justice, if not to Miss Pulham-Allways, at least to Mr. Pykelet, in your next issue. — Yours faithfully,

GERALD AMBERLEIGH.

II. — FROM COUNCILLOR SCRASE

DEAR MR. HEDGES, — I am venturing to send you a box of cigars to smoke during the festive season. They are, I think, not bad, and I know that you

are one who can appreciate tobacco when you meet with it. May I congratulate you on your article on the proposed iniquitous diversion of the Charton Road? It seemed to me admirable both in substance and manner, although, if a criticism might be found, it would probably bear upon the lenience of your pen and your too kind generalizations. But a busy man like yourself, with a thousand duties, many of them small and vexatious, to perform (and, indeed, Mrs. Scrase and I often marvel you can get through it all), and a new-comer among us too, cannot of course be in a position to know, as I, for example, must, with premises right on the present road, how utterly unnecessary and contrary to public interest this step is.

You look at the case from the broad standpoint of a publicist; whereas I, who have lived here all my life, see it also as a born and bred Eastburian. To me and mine, and I assure you to most of the town, this change would be a blow too severe to contemplate without emotion. Call us sentimentalists if you will — there is no disgrace in that — but we, like yourself, are something more too. We stand for what is right and just against the new and predatory faction which follows Mr. Garner. It is therefore that I say, More power to your elbow!

The cigars, I ought to tell you, are of the famous 1899 crop and are absolutely ready for smoking. But you should keep them in a warm place. If

you have a cupboard near a chimney, so much the better.

With all the compliments of the season, believe me, dear Mr. Hedges, yours cordially,

SIMON SCRASE.

III. — FROM COUNCILLOR GARNER

MY DEAR HEDGES, — Christmas being on us, I take the opportunity of sending you a case of sherry, a wine which is, I am glad to say, coming into fashion again. So far as I am concerned it never went out, and my father before me was true to it too.

If you would bring Mrs. Hedges to supper on Boxing Day it would give Mrs. Garner and myself very great pleasure, and we would have a jolly evening and forget for once that there were any troubles or differences of opinion on anything, or that there existed so trumpery an affair as this Charton Road diversion, on which I see you take a surprising and, for you, not too well-informed line.

I wish you had consulted me before writing that article, as I am probably the only man in Eastbury who really knows all the facts. No doubt certain persons on the present road will suffer, but the public good is the only thing to be considered — the welfare of the greatest number. Moreover, Lord Aberley gives the land, and that means much,

especially when you remember how important is his goodwill to Eastbury as a whole. But this is talking shop, and that I have no wish to do.

Let me have a line saying that Mrs Hedges and you will honour us; and, hoping that the wine will be to your taste, believe me, with all good wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, yours sincerely, RUFUS GARNER.

Tracts that took the Wrong Turning

I. — What's the Odds?

ONCE upon a time there was a small tradesman named John Stone. He was an honest, hard-working man, who did his best to make both ends meet and support his wife and three small children. But, try as he might, custom left his shop, while to make things worse, his assistant robbed him, and he found himself one morning with only ten pounds between himself and the bankruptcy court. His debts amounted to over thirty pounds, and more stock was needed.

In his despair he went for a walk, and chanced to meet an old schoolfellow named James Smith. "Hullo, John," said James, "why do you look so glum?" John told him. "It is lucky you met me," was the reply, "for I've got a tip for the races to-morrow which can't fail. Take my advice. Put your ten pounds on it."

John Stone had never made a bet in his life and he was reluctant to do so now, but at last he let

James persuade him, and the next morning handed him the ten pounds.

All that day, until the news of the race reached London, John Stone was in an agony. He dared not look his wife in the face, and in his business was so absent-minded that his few customers thought he must be ill. At last he saw a boy rushing down the street with a paper, and calling to him he bought one and feverishly tore it open. His horse had won — at 20 to 1. John Stone had made £200; and that night James brought him this sum together with the £10 he had wagered.

John Stone immediately paid all his debts, acquired some new and attractive stock, and at once began to prosper; and he is now the owner of a row of shops. He is also a respected town councillor and churchwarden.

In spite of all temptation to do so, he never made another bet.

II. — Their First Drinks

Henry Martin had been brought up by his parents as a strict teetotaller, and until his twenty-fifth year he remained so. Then one evening he went to a smoking concert and was induced, much against his will, to drink a glass of whisky and soda-water.

That was thirty years ago, and the taste so disgusted him that he has never repeated the experiment.

George Dundas was also brought up as a strict teetotaller, being taught not only to look upon alcohol as poison, but upon those who took it as sinners. One day he was dared by a companion to drink a glass of beer, and rather than be called a coward he did so. He was astonished first to find it agreeable, and secondly, after drinking it, not to be rolling about the floor in a state of beastly intoxication, or lurching home to beat his wife and throw his children out of the window. The consequence was that the next evening he took another glass, and has enjoyed his beer regularly ever since, and is now a hale old man of ninety-seven.

III. — The Result of Petty Theft

Thomas Sand and Arthur Wheeler were two village lads who lived near each other and always walked to and from school together. One day they noticed that Farmer Brown's orchard gate, which was usually locked, was open, and they peeped in. Just in front of them was a tree covered with beautiful ripe apples. They looked in all directions, but no one was in sight, and in a few moments the boys had shaken down enough apples to fill their

pockets and were again in the road enjoying the plunder. Just as they turned the corner whom should they meet but Farmer Brown with his big whip? He looked at the apples they were munching and recognized them as his own. "Hullo, you young Socialists!" he said, with a laugh. The boys grew up to positions of trust and are now J. P.'s.

Wayside Notes

I. — The Snow-White Lie

HE is sixty-five years of age and usually looks it. A tall ruddy man, with a great shock of iron-grey hair, and, though walking a little creakingly, as sons of the soil must do in later years, he is still active and powerful, but — sixty-five. . . .

Now sixty-five is all right if you have a good master and have been in his employ for a long time; but sixty-five is the devil if you are seeking a new job. And Old Jack, as we have thoughtlessly called him (Heaven forgive our want of prescience!), after seeming to be as deeply rooted here as any tree, was, three weeks ago, suddenly told that he would not be wanted after that Saturday. For how many years he had lived in this village and done his daily task on the same farm, I cannot say, but certainly for nearly forty, and never an hour off for illness in all that time. And now he had to go; find a new master, a new cottage; begin again.

He tried near about, day after day, for a week,

but to no purpose, and then began to extend his view, giving up all hope of remaining among his old neighbours, and one evening he brought me an advertisement clipped from a paper. "Would you mind answering that?" he asked; for Jack did not want to be beholden to his late employer for anything, and he is one of those fortunate creatures who can neither read nor write.

So I answered it. I said that I had known Jack for so long; that he was sober, willing, agreeable, capable, and all the rest of it; and that he had been dismissed through no fault of his own, but because the farmer was making changes all round. And, I added, "he is fifty-eight." Last night Jack came to tell me he had got the place.

His serious trouble will come when it is time to draw his old-age pension; mine, when I confront St. Peter.

II. — Two Dreams

Amid the welter of idiotic fancies that crowd one's sleeping mind, now and then will emerge a definite and not unsensible thought. Some dreamers may have these oftener, but with me their appearance is certainly less than once a year. Once, for example, long ago, I woke in a state of excited triumph at a revelation that had suddenly broken in upon me as

with the light of noon. "That's extraordinary," I said to myself, "I must write it down at once." I have said this before and gone to sleep before I could get the paper, or on beginning to write have found it rubbish; but this particular *trouvaille* was better, for the next morning I found I had written this: "Witches are composite like ourselves. Witches are both good and bad. There are no merely witches."

Last night, however, I did better than that (which, after all, is only metaphysics), for I dreamed a Sancho Panza proverb, and I claim for it such excellence — such all-round sagacity — that if it were dropped into a collection like the late Ulick Burke's *Spanish Salt*, it would defy detection as an imposture. This is it: "There are two words for everything." Surely that is wisdom! The whole theory of party politics is in it, for one thing; and indeed all argument. It should pass into the language as a salient sapience: "There are two words for everything." And I made it up in my sleep.

III. — The Compact

"Pathos?" he said. "I'll tell you something pathetic. When I was at Bart.'s I had a great friend, another student, named Lewin. That was, let me see, more than forty years ago. We were both devoted to music; I played the violin, he

the 'cello; and we spent a great deal of time at the opera. When we were through, I stayed on for a while as H. P., and Lewin went on a P. & O. boat as ship's doctor, and taking a fancy to the East remained out there. Well, when we parted on the night before he sailed, we made an undertaking that whenever we next met, and at all our future meetings, each of us would greet the other by whistling the opening notes of Beethoven's Eighth Symphony. You know how it goes ——" and he whistled it.

"Well," he continued, "when we made that promise we expected to meet often, for he had then no notion of settling in Japan. But settle he did, and he came back to England for the first time only last week. I had heard from him now and then, and a brief letter came the other day announcing his arrival and asking me to dine with him at his hotel. 'Come up to my room,' he added. So I went. He was on the top floor, and as I approached his room a chambermaid came along and told me he was there and the door had been left open for me. Just as I put my hand to the knob I recollected our old agreement and, standing on the door-mat, I began to whistle. Funny I should have forgotten it till I was so near him; but I had.

"He made no response, but, hearing him moving about inside, I repeated it louder. Again he did not respond; so I pushed the door open and marched in in full blast, like a drum and fife band. He ran

to grasp my hand, shook it warmly and thrust me into a chair. 'But why didn't you whistle too?' I asked him. He looked at me blankly for a moment and then fetched an ear-trumpet from the table. He had become totally deaf."

IV. — Spoiled Stories

It is a melancholy experience to come upon an old and favourite joke badly mauled; and, unhappily, as England becomes more and more in love with facetiousness, the experience is likely to get more and more common. One of the worst examples I have lately found in a sixpenny illustrated paper. It runs thus: —

"The flooding of a Yorkshire mine had a tragic result, and a miner was deputed to break the news to a poor woman whose husband had been drowned. 'Does Widow Jones live here?' 'No,' was the indignant lady's reply. '*You're a liar!*' he said."

This morning, after much search, I put my hands on the volume containing the original story as it was written by a master between forty and fifty years ago. I have copied it out: —

"'Yes, I remember that anecdote,' the Sunday-school superintendent said, with the old pathos in his voice, and the old sad look in his eyes. 'It

was about a simple creature named Higgins, that used to haul rock for old Maltby. When the lamented Judge Bagley tripped and fell down the court-house stairs and broke his neck, it was a great question how to break the news to poor Mrs. Bagley. But finally the body was put into Higgins' wagon, and he was instructed to take it to Mrs. B., but to be very guarded and discreet in his language, and not break the news to her at once, but do it gradually and gently. When Higgins got there with his sad freight, he shouted till Mrs. Bagley came to the door.

"Then he said, 'Does the Widder Bagley live here?'

" 'The *Widow* Bagley? *No*, sir!'

" 'I'll bet she does. But have it your own way. Well, does *Judge* Bagley live here?'

" 'Yes; Judge Bagley lives here.'

" 'I'll bet he don't. But never mind, it ain't for me to contradict. Is the Judge in?'

" 'No, not at present.'

" 'I jest expected as much. Because, you know —— Take hold o' suthing, mum, for I'm a-going to make a little communication, and I reckon maybe it'll jar you some. There's been an accident, mum. I've got the old Judge curled up out here in the wagon, and when you see him you'll acknowledge yourself that an inquest is about the only thing that could be a comfort to *him!*' "

That is by Mark Twain, and to my mind is a perfect example of the art of telling a story.

V. — How Poetry came to the Course

"Now, ladies, if you really want something to do," said the owner, "name my three yearlings for me."

"Oh, how delightful!" they exclaimed in one voice.

"But remember," he continued, "that the names should be good ones. The year after next, one of them may run in the Derby, and no horse with a bad name ever won that."

"Of course," said the first lady. "But who would give a beautiful race-horse a common name?"

"Lots of people," said the owner. "There's a horse at this moment called 'Done in the Eye.'"

The ladies shuddered.

"You'll get nothing like that from me," said the second lady. "I can promise you. I shall find you a lovely romantic name, all melody and fragrance. What do you say, for example, to — to 'Tristram'?"

"Or 'Hyacinthus'?" said the second lady.

"Or 'Saladin'?" said the third.

"Charming, charming!" replied the owner. "There's only one criticism I should make: all the horses are fillies."

"Women's names," said the first lady, "are more beautiful than men's. I have chosen one for my filly already — 'Undine' — the wonderful water-nymph of Fouqué's story. Could there be a more magical

name than 'Undine'? It will bring music to the race-card, poetry to the course."

"And my choice is 'Thalia,' the Muse of idyllic verse," said the second lady.

"And mine," said the third, "is the most fragile and exquisite of flowers — 'Anemone.'"

"Right-O," said the owner, and wrote them down.

. . . . .

A year later the fillies were running in various races.

"'Ere you are, sir," cried the bookmakers. "Eight to one 'The liar'! Two hundred to a pony, 'The liar'!"

"Sixes 'Any money'!" they cried.

"Now, then," they cried; "here's your chance. Twelve to one against 'Undone'! Twelve to one 'Undone'!"

VI. — R. I. P.

An acute French traveller wandering observantly through England once remarked that every town seemed to have several men named Job Masters, and he wondered that no confusion resulted. Alas! a time has come, or is about to come, when no traveller, French, or otherwise, will ever say this again. For Job Masters is dead. The game is up. Where once was his stable is now a garage; where

once was his horse is now an internal combusion engine; where once was his "fly" (strange but cherished misnomer!) is now a motor-car. The end may not be quite yet, but it draws near and nearer every moment. And being so near, and this being an age of haste and anticipation, let his epitaph be written: —

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF POOR

JOB MASTERS,

Who, patient as his great namesake,
waited steadily to be employed,
on no nourishment but a straw.
He was always ready to drive anybody anywhere,
in rain or shine, heat or cold.
His horses were old and his carriages
were older,
but they were all we could get,
and we had to put up
with them.
His watchwords were Livery and Bait,
and he will be sadly missed.
His end was Petrol.

What an irony of circumstance it will be if, when the melancholy day arrives, Job Masters has a motor funeral!

VII. — THE "WHITEBAIT"

Stories of money-lenders are usually good reading — for those who do not happen to have gone

a-sorrowing. A man to be a successful money-lender must also be something of a commander too. He must have certain of those qualities of shrewdness and observation that are the stuff of success; he must be very much a man of the world. Such was the famous lawyer Ford, of Henrietta Street, better known by his trade name of "George Samuel," who died in 1868 after a crowded career as a racing man and financier of the gilt-edged needy. Many stories were told of him that would entitle him to a place in any study of those useful and unlovely buttresses of society, but the one that particularly pleases me is concerned with an occasion when he was a victim.

George had a horse named "Quo Minus" running for the Ascot Stakes, and he was there to see the race. He was there also to hand over to a client a loan of £7000, which he carried in notes of all sizes in his pocket-book, but which the client had declined to receive until the races were over. George, therefore, was standing by the paddock rails intent on the running, when a small boy leaped on his shoulders crying out, "'Quo Minus' wins! 'Quo Minus' wins!" Mark the cleverness of this. Had he said anything else, the money-lender would have angrily shaken him off, but such confidence in "Quo Minus," his own horse, was flattering. However, he did order the boy to get off, and after the failure of "Quo Minus" was a certainty the boy did so and disappeared, and with him went the pocket-book.

Samuel, in his disgust and rage, sought advice from Lord Chesterfield, who knew most of the ropes, and he at once offered counsel. "Go to Canty," he said, naming a well-known loose character of the middle of the last century, who not only kept a gaming-house, but did a considerable business as a receiver of stolen goods. Off went George, therefore, to Canty, who welcomed him with the remark, "I know what you've come about." "Do you?" said George. "Yes," said Canty, "and I fancy it can be managed, but you must give up all hope of ever seeing the whitebait again." "Whitebait!" exclaimed Samuel, "what on earth is the whitebait?" "Why," said Canty, "the little fish — the twenties and the tenners and the fivers. The rest I'll try and get back for you." And so he did; but Samuel never ceased to regret the whitebait, even though he often told the story with gusto.

VIII. — The Nice Things

Denmark (which gave us Hamlet and Queen Alexandra and Genée) has had a very charming thought. According to the Copenhagen correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, the Danish Herbert Samuel has hit upon the following means of providing money for the indigent blind of that country.

The Postmaster-General has ordered (since he seems to be Master of the Mint too) a coin to be struck which bears the words, "The child seeing the light for the first time presents a tribute to the child who will never see it." These coins, or rather tokens, will be sold to the parents of all babies having sight, as lucky charms, for whatever they will care to give, and the money thus acquired will go to a fund for those poor darkened others.

Reading this, my thoughts travelled to a passage in a recent work on Italy, by Mr. Richard Bagot, which I copy here, since it is cognate to the piteous theme and has a similar vein of gold running through it: —

"In the famous theatre, La Scala — which, with the San Carlo at Naples, is the largest opera-house in the world — there is a mysterious box immediately above the stage on the fifth tier which appears to be always unoccupied. As a matter of fact, however, this box is never empty when opera is being performed. Screened from the gaze of the public, the most appreciative of all among the audience are following every note of the music from its recesses. Men and women sit in that box entranced — transported temporarily into another world, a world in which they can forget that they are not as the majority of their fellow-creatures, and are able, if only for a few hours, to feel that no dark and hopeless veil exists between then and the rest of

humanity. They are all blind, the occupants of this box. Some sixty years ago a Milanese lady, who was the proprietress in the freehold of a box in La Scala, bequeathed her rights to the then Archbishop of Milan, and the Archbishop made them over to an asylum for the blind on the condition that the box should for ever be devoted to the exclusive use of its inmates.

"In order that these should enjoy to the full the intentions of the donor, the directors of the theatre accorded to the blind tenants of the box the privilege of free entry into the theatre - a grant in itself sufficiently generous, since in all Italian theatres an entrance fee of sums ranging up to five francs is demanded in excess of the sum paid for the place occupied. I wonder if any spot in the wide world contains so much concentrated happiness as this box in La Scala on an opera night. The blind are sent there in rotation, so that all the inmates of the institution may have one or more evenings' bliss in the course of the season. To them an evening at La Scala is an evening spent in Paradise."

Now, it would be very interesting, would it not? if similar examples of thoughtful and imaginative kindness from other nations could be collected and brought together in a magazine or review, or even a daily paper. The world cannot be too widely instructed in such deeds.

IX. — Accounts Delightfully Rendered

I have discovered a new shop — or rather Stores — with a most ingratiating way of composing its bills. Not that any process (except a premature and miraculous receipt stamp) could make a bill essentially and *au fond* other than it is — a detestable thing. But since apparently there must be bills, it is pleasant to get them made readable, not alone by the chance of discovering an arithmetical inexactitude, but for their own sake as — more or less — literature.

As a rule I do not look at bills; but chancing to glance at one the other day, my eye met the following item:

"1 partridge that has been hung long enough to be suitable for Sunday lunch . . . . . 3s. 6d."

"Why all this?" I asked of the châtelaine. "Yes," she replied, "isn't it odd? They always repeat my words in their bills." "And how long have we been dealing there?" I asked. "About three weeks," she said. "And you never told me!" I remonstrated. "In this grey world, you never told me. Let me see some other specimens, I implore."

She brought them, and I was charmed. I read: —

"1 dozen absolutely new-laid eggs, with the dates legibly on them, brown for choice . . . . . 2s.,"

and

"1 really tender duckling (the last wasn't) . 4s.,"

and

"A shoulder of Welsh mutton just large enough for four persons . . . 3s. 2d."

Such bills as these are not only reminders of what you owe, but of what you were. They are biographical.

"Splendid," I said. "Now we will really put them to the test." So I drew up an order which, among other things carefully described, included "a pork-pie, about 2 lb., not the kind with crust like plaster of Paris, but a soft short crust into which the flavour of the meat has found its way."

"There," I said, "that will beat them." But I was wrong. When the bill came in, in a neat clerky hand on the blue paper was written, without the faintest sign to indicate whether the writer was a humorist or a machine, this item: —

"1 pork-pie, 2 lb., not the kind with crust like plaster of Paris, but a soft short crust, into which the flavour of the meat has found its way . . 2s. 4d."

Who would ever choose to deal anywhere else?

The Fourpenny Box

I. — The Way with a Lord

WHEN the time comes to pass under review one's roll of fortuitous acquaintances, many of us whose habit it is to loaf in the Charing Cross Road (best of thoroughfares since Holywell Street was tumbled down by an immoral County Council) will find that the most amusing company has been fished from fourpenny boxes and dusty shelves. In this way a few months ago I met Joseph Brasbridge, and in this way last week I met Henry Melton. Joseph Brasbridge was a silversmith in Fleet Street, and a considerable dog when the shutters were up, dwindling, in his eightieth year, to a reflective autobiographer (not wholly, however, lost to the taste of ginger in the mouth) under the formidable title of *The Fruits of Experience*. Of him, for the present, I say no more. He is already old in bottle and will keep. But Henry Melton demands attention, because Henry Melton, of all of us, knew the right way of a man with a lord, and lords were never so under the microscope as they have lately been.

Brasbridge published in 1824; Melton, who was hatter to the late King when Prince of Wales, published forty and more years later, and called his book *Hints on Hats*, although its true value (which so often is not where the author deems it) is its hints on Melton. The hat part is nothing: you may get it in any cyclopædia; but Mr. Melton in relation to his patrons is everything.

Mr. Melton senior had £100,000, and the son was educated to inherit it. But "a reverse in the will of Dame Fortune" ("that fickle jade," as he finely calls her,) made it necessary to enter business.

"About this time [he writes] the successful career of the famous Mr. Moore, the hatter, attracted my attention. The fashionable position of his son, his four-in-hand, his general reception into good society, his reputation as a patron of art and *belles lettres*, pointed to well-earned wealth in trade as something worthy a young gentleman's ambition; so I made up my mind to be a Hatter, and set forth, with the earnest enthusiasm of youth, on a career which I expected would lead certainly to wealth and fame."

That was, I gather, in the thirties; and with not a little sagacity for one who had spent so much time in expecting to be well off, the young man selected the Last of the Dandies — then still cutting a figure at Gore House and in the Row — as his first client.

"With the dash of youth I at once threw my

bread upon the water, and wrote to the Count in as delicate a manner as I well could, stating my ambition as desirous of making even my calling associated with art and taste. By return of post I received a courteously worded request to wait upon the Count at Kensington Gore. Here I was received in the true style in which an exquisite might be expected to welcome an aspirant to taste. I stood before him, in my own opinion, the Benvenuto Cellini of hats before a Pope — honoured in the greatness of my patron, but still, in my own conceit, a master of my art. I soon had reason for some diffidence as to my own merits, even in my own business, and speedily recognized the master mind of elegance and fashion.

"The Count, upon receiving me, evidently felt resolved to test the aspiring youth who had addressed him. He quickly requested me to point out what, according to my views, should constitute the essential merits of a hat.

"On a table in the Count's dressing-room I observed some fourteen hats lying all ready for wear. The Count seemed rather pleased with my zeal; and this kind reception, as well as his refined and elegant manner, encouraged me in the discussion which ensued upon the subject of hats, and ended in our mutually agreeing that the *desiderata* in regard to a hat consisted in its being light, although of a substance sufficient to retain its shape (a requisite in which all foreign-made hats were at that time, and

are even now, deficient); that it should be waterproof; that it should be so made as to ensure comfort; that the shaping and blocking and trimming were merely matters of taste and fashion of the period, but that the style of the hat should, nevertheless, be carefully studied, as much as possible, to make the wearer look like a gentleman.

"My replies generally seemed to satisfy the Count, who, in conclusion, said, smiling, 'You have evidently made a study of your business. But you have forgotten,' he added, 'that a hat should be in proportion to the height of the wearer.'

"I ventured to observe that I could not regard additional height as an improvement.

"'Quite the contrary,' he observed. 'It would render monstrous what was before distinguished. But a tall man, nevertheless, ought not to wear a low-crowned hat. It is an incongruity, and renders him conspicuous, and that, as I take it, is to be avoided. Again, a short man in a high hat is out of proportion; it dwarfs him, as long hair does a lady who is *petite*.'

"Upon this I ventured the remark that in such cases exactly it was that the eye of the hatter was required, for the wearer of a hat was not always the best judge of the style that best suited him.

"'Some men make their own styles, Mr. Melton,' was the Count's reply, with a gentle smile. . . .

"My interview with this great leader of fashion ended in my receiving orders that resulted in a

brilliant success. No part of the Count's personal attraction was more studied by him than his hat, nor was it the less noticed and admired by the public. His taste was marvellous, and his quickness of eye in costume beyond all that can be imagined, save by a beau of the Brummell school.

"As an illustration of the fact, his hats varied in dimensions to suit his coats. For his lighter, cut-off riding-coat he wore his hat smaller in all dimensions than for the thicker overcoats, especially that magnificent sealskin coat first introduced by him, and which now is somewhat general — indeed, has been imitated even by the ladies in their piquant winter jackets.

"Need I say that the consummate acuteness of this idea of a distinct hat for a particular coat left a deep and lasting impression of its importance on myself? Indeed, the mere enunciation of it made the fact self-evident, that a hat should most assuredly suit the width of shoulders or figure as much as the face."

It is hard to have to omit Mr. Melton's remarks on other of his patrons — the Prince of Wales, of whose tall hat a picture is given, "since many of the readers of this brochure may be resident in the country, in foreign climes, or remote colonies, and may not know the style" of it; the Prince Consort, who was "a great advocate for ventilation" and wore a modified "Anglesea"; the Earl of Harrington,

whose test of a hat was to stand on it; and even Sir Edwin Landseer, who sent to Mr. Melton for a hat of the Prince Consort's to insert in a picture, and was then so lost to decency as to place it in such a position that the maker's name was not disclosed.

I have no room for the expansion of these passages; for it is the spectacle of Mr. Melton as the plain man in relation to a nobleman that is the interesting thing; and to that we now come. The narrative, again, is Mr. Melton's. Nobody else could have written it.

"Some time since I received a telegraphic message from the Earl of Stamford and Warrington to wait upon his lordship, who was then at Bradgate, his family seat in Leicestershire; and with all speed, following in good order the magnetic compliment of his lordship's request, I arrived at the nearest station to Bradgate. Being strange to the locality, my mind was busily occupied in deliberating as to which hotel I should put up at, and casting my eye along the platform to catch a porter whose countenance would impress me favourably with the desired recommendation, my eye fell upon one of his lordship's six-feet footmen, who, addressing me with marked respect, said he was there to receive me. I thanked him, and asked about the hotel, when he said, 'I have been sent with a conveyance to take you to the house.'

"At the house I arrived, duly welcomed by the

butler, who paid me every polite attention. Orders were given to show me to my bedroom, where having indulged in a brush and my tortoiseshell, I returned to the reception-room, and to a glorious supper of the good things of Bradgate House, to which I did ample justice.

"On retiring to my bedroom a cheerful fire welcomed me with that spirting of the fiery embers which gives such a joyous charm to the log. My room, I need hardly say, was elegantly appointed, and afforded me a princely repose. On rising the next morning, I was strongly impressed with the view from my bedroom window, situated in the happiest position for a fine bit of park scenery. The day was Sunday, and hearing that service would be performed in the house, I sent a message to the Earl to know if I might be permitted to attend. The request was answered in the true spirit of amiable condescension for which the Earl is so justly famed, and in company with the household, of between thirty and forty domestics, I wended my way into the fine room in which the service was performed, and there a seat was most graciously placed for me between the household and the noble Earl and his beautiful Countess. I heard the service excellently read by the Rev. Mr. Paine, the Earl's private chaplain, who concluded it with a very admirable sermon. A scene of this character could not fail to be devoutly impressive to one, like myself, fresh from the crowded and miscellaneous worship

of a metropolitan church assemblage. Nor was the effect lessened by my walk (after a capital luncheon) through the beautiful scenery of Bradgate Park, fraught as it is with reminiscences of the ancient family of the Ferrers of Groby, and doubly famous as the estate for whose restoration Elizabeth Woodville knelt as a widow at the 'Queen's Oak' to Edward IV after the battle of Taunton, and conquered her conqueror so far as to become his queen in the year ensuing. Here, too, lived Lord Admiral Seymour, who walked in this park with his wife Catherine, the fortunate dowager-queen of the wife-killing Henry VIII. And here, with Lord Dorset, her father, were passed the few happy days of the Lady Jane Grey.

"My walk at an end, I retired to a dinner worthy of the Lord of Enville, and this disposed of, in the quiet coolness of the evening, I strolled over, on the gentle invitation of an accompanying cigar, to a remote and romantic part of the park, called 'Anstey.' Here I looked in upon Reeves, one of the principal superintendents of his lordship's preserves. I was much charmed with the interesting associations of the cottage, and more than pleased with its inmates, who consisted of an excellent mother, with a family of well-behaved, nice children; while Reeves himself displayed an amount of intelligence and education, as well as information, which gratified me vastly. He was well up in the subjects of the day, and speaking sympathizingly of the

demise of the Prince Consort, touched me so keenly as to prompt me on my return to town to send him a book which no man should neglect to read, *The Speeches and Addresses of the late Prince Consort;* a work, indeed, which I have, with much pleasure to my own feelings, presented to several of my friends. . . .

"Another agreeable night took me on to Monday, when his lordship briefly gave me one of his usual liberal orders."

That is the way to treat a lord. Mr. Melton knew it exactly. Sad to think that the creation of a great number of peers would impair this admirable attitude of homage. But I fear that it would. Not even Mr. Melton, with all his stores of reverence and his instant appreciations, could be quite master of himself if the nobleman who invited him to the country — to receive briefly however liberal an order — had been converted but yesterday from material which he had known in the rough.

II. — Hell-Fire Dick

I have before said that the time is never quite ripe to edit Lamb, and another proof of that statement occurred last evening when I brought

home the Rev. J. Richardson's *Recollections of the Last Half Century* (1856) and came upon Mr. Richard Vaughan. For it was several years earlier that I had been in need of that gentleman, and could not then find him.

Writing to Sarah Hutchinson in August 1815, Mary Lamb, in what is perhaps her most charming letter, describes a visit just paid by herself and her brother to Cambridge. "We set off on the outside of the Cambridge coach from Fetter Lane at eight o'clock and were driven into Cambridge in great triumph by Hell-Fire Dick five minutes before three." To these words, when preparing my edition of the letters, I could put no illuminating commentary; but now I know Dick well. Richard Vaughan, or Hell-Fire Dick, after losing his licence as the landlord of the Bell at Cambridge, owing to the effects of his popularity among the undergraduates, returned to driving, and tooled the up "Telegraph" from the Sun in Trumptington Street half-way to London, and brought the down "Telegraph" back every afternoon. He was a very horsey-looking man, "bony, gaunt, and grim," and his complexion was "indicative of continual exposure to the winds and the weather and to habitual indulgence in what is taken to keep the weather out." When not driving he was a sportsman of varied interests, of which cock-fighting was chief; he instructed the young bloods in driving; and he possessed a rough and ready wit which found its way into the world

from the box of the "Telegraph" by the medium of a voice which a boatswain in a storm would envy.

Such was the coachman who deposited Charles and Mary Lamb in Cambridge in August 1815.

III. — An Outrage

The question, Can a translation be a classic? would receive an affirmative reply, I take it, on FitzGerald's *Omar* alone, fortified, if needful, by Shelton's Don Quixote, Florio's Montaigne, Jowett's Plato, and Jebb's Sophocles. Yet why climb so high? A classic, after all, is a classic, whether of the slopes or the peak of Parnassus — whether for the young or the mature — and the question is as satisfactorily answered by naming the original English version of *Struwwelpeter* as any more pretentious work. Who made this translation (in the middle of the last century) that small Victorians might develop worthily into full-grown moral Edwardians and respectable grey-haired Georgians I know not; nor can I examine into its closeness to the German original. Neither name nor fidelity matters. What does matter is that the text was established; it became Scripture; it was done for all time. Babel was again defeated: a German book rooted in the very soil that nourished the roof-trees of the

land had become an English book rooted in the very soil that nourished our roof-trees too. The wear and tear of life sadly impair the memory, but few middle-aged and older persons in whose nursery Shock-headed Peter held sway would be unable to cap most of the verses in it still.

> Here is cruel Frederick, see!
> A horrid wicked boy was he;
> . . . . .
> He kill'd the birds, and broke the chairs,
> He threw the kitten down the stairs,
> And, oh! far worse than all beside,
> He whipp'd his Mary till she cried.

What old Peterite could fail, on hearing those lines, to call up the picture, or, seeing the picture, could fail to recollect something, at any rate, of the lines? The work has passed into the national consciousness; it is on the canon. Who can ever forget the story of Harriet, the matches, and the cats? And suppose the question were asked, What was the name of the magician with the giant ink-pot? the answer would be, of course, "Agrippa — tall Agrippa." And if the question were, What was the name of little Suck-a-Thumb? the answer would be "Conrad"; or of his corrector? "The great long red-legg'd Scissor man." It is such familiarity as this which makes classics, and *Struwwelpeter* stands high among them.

What, then, is to be said of anyone who, with all this weight of tradition accumulating through sixty

years at least, shall set out to translate *Struwwelpeter* afresh, retaining its pictures, but changing the text? Not changing it much, but sufficiently to baffle the ear in every line. How characterize him? For there lies before me a book to all appearance the real thing. That is to say, it has a pasteboard cover of the right size, and it is called *Struwwelpeter*, and Shock-headed Peter straddles upon it. But within? Let me swiftly indicate the quality of this pretender to the throne. You remember the last four lines of the verse beneath Peter himself: —

> And the sloven, I declare,
> Never once has comb'd his hair;
> Anything to me is sweeter
> Than to see Shock-headed Peter.

Not very wonderful lines, maybe, but the lines that we have known and rejoiced in for half a century. Listen to the impostor: —

> Now the boys who Peter meet
> Loudly shout from street to street,
> "Get your nails cut! Look, there's hair!"
> And the girls all rudely stare.

The slang phrase is introduced in order, one must suppose, the better to recommend it to the juvenile taste of the day. Is that the way? In the story of the Green Huntsman there are many slips and a steady inferiority. Thus, in the authorized version,

> The poor man's wife was drinking up
> Her coffee in her coffee cup.

In the revised version,

> There in the window from a cup
> The huntsman's wife drank coffee up,

— although the artist drew her not at the window but at the door. The sex of the hare's child is changed in the new version.

But worse is to come. Conrad is now "Jimmy," and the Scissor man is merely "the tailor." The famous couplet, so swift and tragic,

> Mamma had scarcely turned her back,
> The thumb was in, Alack! Alack!

is watered down to

> Mother's gone, she spoke in vain,
> Gugg! the thumbs are sucked again;

while the abysmal complacency of the original end goes completely. In our memories are these lines engraven —

> Mamma comes home; there Conrad stands
> And looks quite sad and shows his hands;
> "Ah!" said Mamma, "I knew he'd come
> To naughty little Suck-a-Thumb."

The new version has it —

> When Mamma returns she sees
> Jimmy sad and ill at ease.
> There he stands without his thumbs;
> This of disobedience comes!

That is to say, we lost the character of Mamma

altogether — she is eliminated. Augustus, who would not eat his soup —

> Augustus was a chubby lad —

is now Tommy —

> Young Tommy healthy was and fat;

and Johnny Head in Air becomes Sky-gazing Jack; although Flying Robert (the first modern aviator) is allowed to be Robert still. But I close the pitiful indictment here. In every poem are changes, and all are for the worse. Yet the quality of the change is immaterial; it is the fact of change at all that is wrong. A few things are sacred still.

Seldom does one want one's fourpence back; but this is a case.

IV. — Mrs. Thornton

In *The Sportsman's Vocal Cabinet*, edited by Charles Armiger in 1831, is a description of the great race between Mrs. Thornton on Colonel Thornton's Vingarillo and Mr. Flint on Thornville, at York, on August 25th, 1804. The race was four miles, for 500 guineas and 1000 bye, and 100,000 persons assembled on Knavesmire to witness it, or ten times more than had assembled to see either Eclipse or Bay Malton, those famous fliers. As

much as £200,000 depended on the race, and at starting the betting was 5 to 4 and even 6 to 4 on the lady, and at the end of the third mile 7 to 4 and 2 to 1. But Mr. Flint then took the lead and won, Mrs. Thornton drawing up, "in a sportsmanlike style," before the post. Her backers were thus depressed, "but the spirit she displayed and the good humour with which she bore her loss were so remarkable" — I quote from the *York Herald* — "as greatly to diminish the joy of many of the winners." Isn't that pretty and impossible? The gallant Yorkshiremen!

"Never, surely," writes the reporter, — "never, surely, did a woman ride in better style. It was difficult to say whether her horsemanship, her dress, or her beauty were most admired — the *tout ensemble* was unique. Mrs. Thornton's dress was a leopard-coloured body, with blue sleeves, the rest buff, and blue cap."

But what of the *Vocal Cabinet?* for this, you say, is all prose. Well, a poet made a song on the race which was put into the mouth of the victorious Mr. Flint, addressing his competitor. Here are some of its stanzas, in the same key of gallantry as that of the *York Herald's* article and the Knayesmire gamblers: —

> I denied you a friend to ride by, I confess,
> And for why? — not for sake of the pelf;
> But I wished to enjoy, in a case of such bliss,
> All that pleasure and honour myself.

A Close Finish

Four-fifths of the race, you must candidly own,
You had the "whip hand," while behind
I humbly pursued, till your nag "was broke down" —
Then before you to go, sure, was kind.

But, believe, to the fair I am warmly inclined —
To be always polite I am ready:
Tho' my horse was so rude as to leave you behind,
I will ne'er run away from a lady.

Mrs. Thornton's next race, on which the Colonel, her husband, had a bet of four hogsheads of coti roti and 2000 guineas, and herself a bet of 600 guineas, fell through; but a little later she was again matched, this time with Frank Buckle. Mrs. Thornton rode Louisa, by Pegasus and Nelly. Buckle rode Allegro, also by Pegasus and Allegranti's dam. Mrs. Thornton carried 9 st. 6 lb., and Buckle 3 st. more. Mrs. Thornton was habited in a purple cap and waistcoat, long nankeen skirts, purple shoes, and embroidered stockings. The race was two miles, and Mrs. Thornton, with the greatest skill and judgment, won it by half a neck. Half a neck in two miles suggests that perhaps Mr. Buckle was a gallant too; but the stewards of the Jockey Club seem to have instituted no inquiries.

Colonel Thornton, I find, was Thomas Thornton, of Thornville Royal, Yorkshire, son of a soldier of the '45 and M.P. for York. He was born in 1757, educated at the Charterhouse and Glasgow University, and on his father's death he gave up the Army and took to sport, not only hunting and shooting,

but writing about those pursuits. In 1802 he and his first wife — the lady of the saddle — visited France, and met Napoleon, to whom the Colonel presented a pair of pistols, and in 1806 *A Sporting Tour in France* was published, being the Colonel's letters to the Earl of Darlington, describing his adventures. France attracted him so much that after Waterloo he settled there, and called himself Prince de Chambord and Marquis de Pont. By this time, however, the riding Mrs. Thornton had passed away, and the Colonel had married again. His portrait by Reinagle is in the appropriate ownership of Lord Rosebery, and hangs at The Durdans.

But it is the first Mrs. Thornton who interests me, and I should like to know more of her; but *The Dictionary of National Biography* cannot even record her maiden name. Why do not women ride races to-day? one wonders. They do everything else.

V. — Carlyle's Provocation

The Taylor's Complete Guide; or, a Comprehensive Analysis of Beauty and Elegance in Dress, a slender work published in 1796, claims to do away for ever with badly fitting and unintelligent clothes. "That all the world may be improved," say the authors,

who describe themselves as a "Society of Adepts," "and human nature receive its pristine grace and elegance, is the principal object of our ambition; and by administering to the general good, and conferring an obligation upon industrious individuals, our ultimate end will be answered."

This means, of course, that they were sartorial artists. Merely to cover nakedness was not their line of country for a moment; but rather to drape with grace and elegance the human form, male or female, but preferably male. And not only artists but philosophers. Note how nicely the Adepts steer their barque through this passage: —

". . . the Eye will soon discriminate between Grace and Affectation, between the Elegant Contour and Dress of a complete Gentleman and the extravagant whimsies of a City Fop — these are great considerations in the article of Dress, the former being the result of Grace, Sensibility, and refined experience, the latter the extravagance of folly, under the sanction of the Whim of Fashion; though we would have all our Brothers of the Trade understand us right, in this great particular; although we may in these sheets have occasion to criminate the Luxury of the Whim, to shew what is opposite to Grace and Elegance, we by no means discountenance the Votaries of Fashion; for we are well convinced of its Use and Benefits. The novelty of Fashion is the Nursery of Trade, the propagator of the Arts, and Field of great Employment."

Fashion must, however, be subordinated to the genius of the artist: —

"It matters not whether narrow or broad Backs are the Rage of Fashion, stand-up or turn-down Collars, short or long Waists, or whatever turn the cut of the Skirts may take, the ultimate end is to cut and fit well, taking care to harmonize the prevalence of the Whim, by assimilating the Parts with Prudence and Ease, having the following Maxim in view, That the very Pride of Elegance is collective neatness."

The ground being thus cleared, the Adepts come to business with Section I, Chapter I, "Of the Theory and Practice of Breeches." Here they tell how to measure customers, and particularly — for the others are comparatively simple — how to measure those customers with whose figure "Nature has a little sported." Section II brings us to waistcoats, but again the ground must be cleared, this time by a series of remarks about the cliques that make civil war in the taylors' kingdom.

"We write for the general good, and are conscious of meeting success in the minds and sentiments of the truly liberal; and doubt not that thousands now living (who are humble in their pretensions) will rejoice at the opportunity of having such an easy access to the secret purlieus of the business, which neither time nor application could accomplish to their certainty and satisfaction. The envious asseverations

of rancorous disappointed Men are beneath the notice of true and genuine criticism.

"Candour is the source of true genius, and will never disparage the fruitful efforts of any art; whatever is contrary to this is generally directed by spleen and scurrility, and has nothing to support it but envy and malice. Such ill-nature we despise, being too trivial for serious consideration as mean as calumny itself, the source and offspring of spite and ignorance. Having said so much, we will proceed to the manner of measuring the Waistcoats."

"We mean not by this," say the authors, after some remarks on coats and elegance, "to infringe upon the distinguishing qualities in the making of a gentleman of either the —— or the ——?" Who can guess what those other allies in the great enterprise of gentleman-making are? Who can fill those blanks? But you'll never do it: "either the fencing master or the dancing master." How completely things have changed? There is no longer the slightest need for a gentleman to have recourse to any one of the trio. He can get along in a ready-made suit, dance no steps, and never handle a foil.

And now the Adepts come to the ladies and to some charming courtesies. The drawing-room voice sibilates throughout the section. They say: —

"The great veneration we have for the Ladies makes us a little cautious how we arraign the incon-

sistency of the prevailing rage and fashion of making Habits."

Then they add: —

"As nature has been so delicately graceful in the formation of the Ladies, would it not be more consistent with reason and elegance, if dresses were made coincident with nature, to display the beautiful appearance of their charming features? Fashion hath as many changes as variety, and all within the pale of symmetry and gentility; the Ladies have no occasion to rack their fancies with preposterous distortions; the whole arcanum of extravagance is totally dissimilar and foreign to graceful elegance and ease."

One puts the work down, regretting that journalese has become the universal language of our time. Journalese has no character at all; it is merely commercially useful. A taylor who should write of his art to-day like that would not get a customer, except out of curiosity to see an ass. But isn't it a nice book, and cannot one easily imagine Carlyle throwing it aside in order to begin *Sartor?*

VI. — Two Invitations

The literature of hospitality, so far as I know, has never been studied by the anthologist; but it is

worth it. There would, however, be a terrible embarrassment of riches, for it is a branch of writing in which every warm-hearted person can excel, while there is also an immense deal of the very best. In fact it is impossible to take up any man's Life and letters without coming upon certainly one invitation that extends two hands very alluringly, while when the man is of the large, generous habit of a Scott or a Dickens, not only fond of his friends, but proud (and pardonably so) of his Abbotsford or his Gad's Hill, the unexpected product of his own unassisted genius, why then we get something very fine indeed. But, as I said, the literature of hospitality is within the reach of every one with a hearth and a sense of sodality, and you and I have probably written quite as good invitations — at any rate for a line or so — as Horace, or Pliny, or Victor Radnor himself, because the impulse has been equally true and the friendliness equally cordial.

The first printed invitation to attract my notice occurred in one of Jacob Abbott's Franconia books. It was in rhyme, and the lines, which have never left my memory, are these: —

> Come as early as you can,
> And stay till after tea.

I read those first — or heard them read — about forty years ago. And yesterday I found in an odd volume of the Derbyshire Archæological Society's collections my latest example of printed invitation — the letter which has, indeed, suggested these remarks. It was

written by Sir John Statham, of Wigwell, to the Hon. Charles Stanhope, of Elvaston, who must have been a very delightful guest wherever he went, judging by the figure he cuts in Walpole's letters (Walpole could write an invitation too!) and in Sir Charles Hanbury-Williams's pleasant light verse. But the invitation is attractive not only for the genuineness of its writer's desire to have Stanhope at ease under his roof, but for its description of an English country house on broad lines in the middle of the eighteenth century.

Here it is, just as it was written, country-house spelling and all; the date is probably about 1740–50: —

"Dear Sir, — I was uneasy to leave you, but night at hand, I almost overtook Sir N. I did not drive up to him, but went straite home. I begun to consider how to engage you to come hither. If I cu'd form a delicious place by poetical description I wu'd do it to intice you, but I'll give you a plain natural description, & then you'll not be deceived, since youve seen into nature as far as any man. This was the cheif seate of the great Abbot of Darleigh; I stand in clear air in the region of Health, am not confined, for am above 7 miles in circumference, a Mann[r] without one foot of any one's interfering. In that district is all the convenience of life. Wood, Coal, Corn of all sorts, Park Venison, a Warren for Rabbits, Fish, Fowl, in the uttermost perfection,

exempted from all Jurisdiction, no Bishops, Priests, Proct^rs, Apparato^rs, or any such last mentioned Vermine can breath here.

"Our way of life here is, Every one does that wh. is right in his own eyes, go to bed, sit up, rise early, lie late, all easy, only we are confined to meet at breakfast, and then order by agreem^t what's for dinner; the pastures are loaded with good Beif & Mutton, the dove-coats with pidgeons, the Mews with partridges, the Canals and Steues with excellent fish, and the barne doores with the finest white, plump Phesant fowles, out of those you order your dayly entertainm . After this, if you're for shooting, Moor game, partridges, Wild Ducks, &c at door; if exercise, a good bowling green & many long walks; is reading, a library; if walking, a dry Park, with a delicious nut wood, full of singing birds, turtles and Guinea hens, a delicate Eccho, where musick sounds charmingly. In it are labarinths, statues, arbors, springs, grottos & mossy banks, in the mittls a large clear fish Pond with a draw bridge and Close Arbor, in the water a Cellar for choice liquor, & the whole stow'd full of nimphs kind & obliging without art or designe more than Love for Love.

"There's about 30 families in the liberty, & in every house you may discerne some good blood. If retirement be irksome, on notice to Wirksworth theres loose hands, Gentlemen, Clergymen, &c ever ready at any hour & stay just as long as you'd have 'em and no longer & easy to be told so. This is

really a genuine and true description of this place & way of life if you'l come and try it & use it as your own, as the master is intirely yo^{rs}. I do think you'd say as the first Duke of D. s^{d}, the 3 days he was yearly lost in Needwood forest, those were the only days wherein he tasted life. If rainy weather confines you, I have a library & the famous Chimist M^{r} Harris to amuse you with experiments & a Playwright author of some Comedies to divert you. And as I know you rather delight in giving life than taking it away your visit would give new life yo D^{r} S yr most &c. J. S."

After reading that, I turned once again to the gentle, affectionate lines of a simpler and later host — A. C. Dick, the Scottish lawyer — to his friend, Dr. John Brown, a hundred and more years after. How different is the manner! —

O speed your coming! — Though its charms be few,
The place will please you, and may profit too;
My house, upon the hillside built, looks down
On a neat harbour and a lively town.
Apart, 'mid screen of trees, it stands, just where
We see the popular bustle, but not share.
Full in our front is spread a varied scene —
A royal ruin, grey or clothed with green,
Church spires, tower, docks, streets, terraces, and trees,
Backed by green fields, which mount by due degrees
Into brown uplands, stretching high away
To where, by silent tarns, the wild deer stray.
Below, with gentle tide, the Atlantic sea
Laves the curved beach, and fills the cheerful quay. . . .

Lo! that high officer, big Kate the cook,
With brow all puckered, and most studious look;
She strictly meditates your table fare —
Hence her staid gait, and hence her anxious air.
Provident soul!. already she has bound,
In solemn treaty, half the country round,
The best of barns, byres, shops, and stands, and stalls,
To answer prompt her culinary calls:
New milk, fresh butter, tender fowls, fresh eggs —
Beef, mutton, veal, in chops, steaks, loins, and legs,
Saddles and breasts — with fish of fin and shell,
Hams, tongues, game, venison, more than I can tell;
Besides, whate'er the grocery or the field,
Of spice, preserves, sauce, roots, fruits, stocks may yield —
All are bespoke. — With these, and with her skill,
Native, or learned from Soyer's Oracle,
She waits the day — all hopeful she may share
A festal triumph — lolling on your chair,
(While from the table Mary bears away
The ruined feast) may hear you loudly say,
With smacks emphatic — "I have dined to-day!" . . .

And I myself have looked into a bin
Of glass-bound brandy, whiskey, rum, and gin:
Of these, and those, different, though like in shape,
Dear prisoned spirits of th' impassioned grape,
Have noted which for you to disenthral,
And some fresh claret bought to crown the festival.

Here we have two kinds of host very clearly portrayed — the ostentatious and the modest. But both wanted their guest, and that after all is the main thing.

VII. — Trifling with the Doctor

To find a new parody of Dr. Johnson is not easy; but I have done so. It is in an odd volume of *The Wit's Foundling Hospital* — an exercise in the Hebridean manner describing the great lexicographer in Ireland (where he never was).

The author was Robert Jephson, born in 1736, a Dublin wit and the friend in London of Johnson, Goldsmith, Garrick, Reynolds, and Horace Walpole. On becoming Master of the Horse to Viscount Townshend, then Lord Lieutenant, Jephson returned to Dublin and took to squibs and plays. His chief drama was *Braganza*, produced at Drury Lane in 1775, and his adaptation of *The Castle of Otranto* was successful too. He sat in the Irish Parliament, and died in 1803.

Colonel Marlay, who cuts such a grotesque figure in the narrative, is more like one of the curious Irishmen of whom Amory wrote in that strange, wilful book, *John Buncle*, but I feel sure he would be found to be real enough and that the whole purpose of the parody was to make him, more than anyone, laugh. Dean Marlay, his brother, was the uncle of Henry Grattan, and after being Dean of Ferns became Bishop of Waterford. He knew Johnson well, belonged to the Literary Club, and was famous for his humour. It was he who, when his coachman was asked to get some water from the well and

refused on the grounds that his business was to drive and not run errands, told him to put the pitcher in the carriage and drive for the water; which he did several times: a pleasantry quite in the manner of Swift. The father of the Marlays was the Chief Justice of Ireland.

Now for the parody, which describes a day's excursion from Dublin to Celbridge, the home of Colonel Marlay, his companions being two ladies (one of them Mrs. Jephson) and the Dean. Here is a good passage: —

"Though we passed with a rapid velocity over little more than three leagues of high road to Celbridge, I observed many stately mansions, many well-disposed enclosures, and more towering plantations than any eye but that of a native of Scotland could discover in the black circumference of the whole Caledonian horizon. The pleasure I received from the transient contemplation of such scenes was often interrupted by the sight of tattered mendicants, who crawled from their hamlets of mud on the wayside to howl for charity or to gaze in torpid suspension at the ordinary phenomenon of a passing equipage. National reflections are always illiberal, and often ill founded; the poverty of the lower class of people in Ireland is generally imputed to laziness, but sagacity will not rest satisfied with such a solution, especially when it is considered that the risque of a halter is intuitively preferable

to the certainty of famine, and that the rags of these miserable bipeds might be mended with less trouble than they are worn, and in a shorter time than, if they are shaken off, they can again be indued."

The carriage being overset by pigs — while the party were engaged in song, passing from anthems to the *Beggar's Opera* — the Doctor had an opportunity of conversing with a wayside innkeeper, who thus described his prospective host: —

"The Colonel, he told me, had long served in the Army with great reputation, and had quitted it in some disgust, or to have more leisure for the business of agriculture, in which he takes great delight and is very skilful. His clothing was of goats' skins, fastened together with leather thongs, and girt round the middle by a sash, which he had worn in all the late wars. Since his retirement he had never shaved his beard, which hung below his waist, and was quite white, though his age was but little on the dusky side of fifty. His love of sequestration being generally known, his gate was seldom besieged with idle visitors, and many were deterred from approaching it by fear of a twelve-pounder planted at the orifice of a side wall, commanding the entrance to the mansion; this piece of ordnance, being loaded up to the muzzle with boiled potatoes, spontaneously discharged its vegetable ammunition

in the faces of all who laid hold of his knocker without business or invitation."

Upon meeting the Colonel, the Doctor found that he had been somewhat misinformed. But I must quote: —

"By comparing the authenticity of ocular knowledge with the fallaciousness of legendary rumour, conviction will at last find her sober medium between the dangerous austerity of heterodox rejection and the despicable acquiescence of passive credulity. The beard excepted, which hung thick, long, and albescent below his breast, there was no circumstance of singularity in the Colonel's appearance. He wore his hair in the military fashion, tied behind with a ribbon; a bright garnet-coloured cloth, ornamented with a well-fancied brass button, was his superior tegument; over a tunick of silk proper for the solstitial season, and elegantly wrought in the tambour with variegated embroidery of flowers and foliage; from below the genual articulation to the sucated division of the body he was covered with flesh-coloured Indian linen of a tenuity almost transparent, through which the contour of femoral rotundity filled the eye with a satisfactory plumpness."

The scenery of Celbridge gave the Doctor much satisfaction: so much so that he became sentimental: —

"The lively sallies of my companions of the way, poignant without malice, and frolicksome without fatuity, had occasioned some paroxysms of hilarity, that bordered upon turbulence, but these spasms of the mind were immediately tranquillised by the placidness of the scene before me. I felt pleasure without irritation, and in the sedateness of contentment, lost all appetite for the delirium of extasy. I could not, indeed, forbear laying hold of the fair hand of one of the ladies, and crying out with the enamoured Gallus,

> Hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata Lycoris:
> His nemus: hic ipso tecum consumerer ævo.

My Lycoris, seeming to conceive the full force of this passionate distich, with an amiable subrision of countenance, led me forward to a spot at no great distance, called the island."

This island, in the Liffey, belonged once to Mrs. Vanhomrigh, Swift's Vanessa. Johnson says: —

"Whether it was mentioned to me seriously by Dean Marlay, or was only the extemporaneous effusion of female pleasantry, I cannot now precisely determine, but I think I heard that Vanessa, when mistress of Celbridge, had put down a laurel for a very brilliant couplet, of which Doctor Swift for her own vanity told her she was the subject and he the author. Had the subsequent possessors of Celbridge, with counteractive industry, deracinated a laurel for

every distich published by his posthumous editors, disgraceful to the memory of that singular genius, the island of Celbridge would be destitute of a laurel."

While pondering on the island, the narrator fell into the Liffey, and would have been drowned but for retaining his presence of mind until a cow chanced to pass him on its way to the other shore. Johnson tells us that he

"laid hold on that part of the animal which is loosely pendent behind, and is formed by a continuation of the vertebræ; in this manner I was safely conveyed to a fordable passage, not without some delectation from the sense of progress without effort on my part, and the exhilarating approximation of more than problematical deliverance. . . . As the cutaneous contact of irrigated garments is neither pleasant nor salubrious, I was easily persuaded by the ladies to divest myself of mine; Colonel Marlay obligingly accommodated me with a loose covering of camblet; I found it commodious and more agreeable than the many compressive ligatures of modern drapery. That there might be no violation of decorum, I took care to have the loose robe fastened close before with small cylindrical wires, which the dainty fingers of the ladies easily removed from their own dress, and inserted into mine at such proper intervals as to leave no aperture that could awaken the suscep-

tibility of temperament, or provoke the cachinnations of levity."

So ends this *jeu d'esprit*, which must have given great delight to certain Dublin readers "in the know." But who really made the journey, and why it added to the joke to make him write like the great lexicographer, I suppose we may never discover. Meanwhile of Colonel Marlay one wishes to hear more.

VIII. — Friends

"I picked up to-day," said the Doctor, "a curious old book of travels and anecdotes, in which the writer develops the theory that 'twenty good acquaintances are the change for a friend'; that is to say, that one is as well off with twenty silver shillings as a golden pound. The analogy will not of course hold good, because you can do exactly the same with twenty shillings as with a sovereign, whereas you cannot do the same with twenty acquaintances as with one friend, since they are not friends."

"It depends," said A., "on what one wants. In health and prosperity twenty acquaintances might be more amusing and companionable than a friend; but in illness or adversity they would certainly be disappointing, and they might be a nuisance."

"How would you define a friend?" B. asked.

"I should define him," said A., "as one who although he knows your bad side still likes you."

"And whom, although you know his bad side, you still like?"

"Of course. As I like you."

"Well, in that case," said B., "I don't see how one can talk of acquaintances making up for him at all. He is too different, too distinct."

"It's a good word," said C., "it's a pity to abuse it. Rival counsel who refer scathingly to their 'learned friend' make me furious."

"What was your idea of a friend, Doctor?" asked B.

"I don't think I had thought," he answered. "I suppose in a vague way I knew it was one to whom one could give oneself away safely."

"Not a bad definition," said C., "would be: one who comes in reply to telegrams."

"Yes," said D., "or one who can be counted upon to stay behind and pay the waiter."

"Tell us more about your book," said A.

"It is by a Frenchman," said the Doctor, "who wrote between 1775 and 1805. A diplomatist. A kind of moral Casanova, moving from Court to Court gathering anecdotes instead of victims. He knew every one — from the great Chatham to Voltaire Amusing anecdotes of highwaymen have always been attractive to me. Here is one, of a certain artist in that genre named Boulter, who was hanged in 1778: —

"It was said of him, among other things, that one day riding on horseback on the high-road, he met a young woman who was weeping, and who appeared to be in great distress. Touched with compassion, he asked what was the cause of her affliction; when she told him, without knowing who he was, that a creditor, attended by a bailiff, had gone to a house which she pointed out, and had threatened to take her husband to prison for a debt of thirty guineas. Boulter gave her the thirty guineas, telling her to go and pay the debt, and set her husband at liberty; she ran off, loading the honest gentleman with her benedictions. Boulter, in the meantime, waited on the road till he saw the creditor come out, he then attacked him and took back the thirty guineas, besides everything else that he had about him."

"Such a proceeding," said the Doctor, "must put the celestial Bench in a serious dilemma. The man had been good to the poor girl; that should count in his favour. But he had robbed; that should count against him. But his booty was his own loan; that was not far removed from justice. But he took everything else too; that was robbery, no doubt. All the same, the drying of the poor girl's tears has to count. 'I have known,' the traveller continues, 'many persons who have been robbed in England. All agree in doing justice to the respectful behaviour which these robbers showed to those whom they put under contribution.'

"His meeting with a famous actress of that day was amusing. It was in Paris, and he had gone alone to the theatre: —

"I seated myself in one of the boxes, which was rather dark; there was nobody in it but a lady and her daughter, and a man whom I took for the husband. They were conversing in English, and were making their remarks upon the actors. The lady asked me some questions in bad French, and I answered her in English. She seemed delighted at being able to converse in her own language, and begged me to tell the names of all the actors and actresses who were in the piece. We also talked about the English theatre. She asked me what I thought of Garrick, Mrs. Cibber, and Mrs. Pritchard; I told her I thought them excellent, and gave her my reasons.

"She approved of my judgment, and asked me also what I thought of Mrs. Yates. As for her, I told her, I thought her only a middling performer.

" 'What are her defects?'

" 'She wants mind; she mistakes one passion for another; she is in a rage when she should be weeping.'

" 'Is it long since you saw her?'

" 'I saw her last Tuesday in *Zara*.'

" 'But tell me another instance.'

"I mentioned two or three.

" 'And how should those parts be performed?'

"'I cannot tell: I am no actor; but we may be able to perceive a part is not well performed without being able to play it properly oneself.'

"Perceiving, however, the warmth with which the lady defended Mrs. Yates, I was desirous of recanting, or at least softening the severity of my criticism; but she reminded me of what I had said before, and I endeavoured to justify my assertions. By this time the husband had joined us; and both the young lady and he paid the greatest attention to the conversation, but did not take any part in it.

"At last, the play concluded, I gave my hand to the lady to assist her out of the box, and, as I took leave of her, I looked at her by the light, and perceived that it was Mrs. Yates herself that I had been all the time talking to. I did not let them see that I knew her, but retired.

"She had told me that she lodged at the Hôtel de Tours: I went thither the next morning, and inquired what English persons lodged there: and found them to be Mr. and Mrs. Yates and their daughter. They, as well as myself, had left London on Wednesday, and had arrived in Paris on Sunday. . . .

"I afterwards learnt that she took pleasure in relating this anecdote herself, saying that she had never received so good a lesson. This was in the year 1766, and I have been since assured that she greatly profited by it."

"This incident," said the Doctor, "deserves a place in any collection of such meetings, which are always productive of humour, and usually, in time, of profit. A better story is told of the light conscience of the Neapolitan Smart Set of that day: —

"A young English nobleman was introduced at an assembly of one of the first ladies of Naples, by a Neapolitan gentleman. While he was there his snuff-box was stolen from him. The next day, being at another house, he saw a person taking snuff out of this very box.

"He ran to his friend. 'There,' said he, 'that man in blue, with gold embroidery, is taking snuff out of the box which was stolen from me yesterday. Do you know him? Is not he a sharper?'

"'Take care,' said the other, 'that is a man of the first quality.'

"'I do not care for his quality,' said the Englishman; 'I must have my snuff-box again! I'll go and ask him for it.'

"'Pray,' said his friend, 'be quiet, and leave it to me to get back your box.'

"Upon this assurance the Englishman went away, after inviting his friend to dine with him the next day.

"He accordingly came; and, as he entered, 'There,' said he, 'I have brought you your snuff-box.'

"'Well,' said the Englishman, 'how did you obtain it?'

"'Why,' said the Neapolitan nobleman, 'I did not wish to make any noise about it, therefore I picked his pocket of it.'"

"Very good," said B., "I like that. It pairs off with the story of Charles II and the pickpocket."

"How much did your find cost?" said A.

"Fourpence a volume," said the Doctor; "no old book ought to be more."

IX. — An Aid to Circulation

It is from the past that the wise man draws his lessons; and I have pleasure in reminding the modern editor who is not satisfied with the number of his subscribers of a device invented by one of his ancient predecessors. There lies before me an odd volume of the *Lady's Magazine; or, Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex, appropriated solely to their Use and Amusement.* The year is 1788, and it is stated roundly that the elegant frontispiece is "designed and engraved by the most capital artists in Europe." The magazine is much as one would expect it to be — a miscellany of descriptive articles, short stories (very mysterious or intense), artificial

letters on manners and morals, letters to the editor on questions of etiquette, Eastern tales (then very popular), poetry, largely in the manner of Miss Seward, and a budget of news of the month. Each number also has a new pattern and a new song.

All this is conventional; the novelty — the trick to gain circulation — is the inclusion every month of "enigmatical questions," or lists of names of well-known residents in certain of the chief centres of England. Thus — "Enigmatical List of Young Ladies in Durham"; "Enigmatical List of Beauties in the Isle of Wight"; "Enigmatical List of Young Gentlemen of Scarborough"; "Enigmatical List of Bachelors in the Neighbourhood of Wolverley, Shropshire"; "Enigmatical List of the Names of some of the Officers of the Warwickshire Militia." Sometimes one finds the references almost too local, as in the "Enigmatical List of Young Ladies at Miss Cowperthwaite's Boarding-School, Ipswich"; but Ipswich boarding-schools seem to be favoured, for among the poetry I find this somewhat daring epigram: —

"Addressed to Miss C——s, at Miss Harrison's Boarding-School, Ipswich, on the author's first seeing her at church —

"O C——s, thou enchanting fair!
Hast play'd the robber's part!
Thou lately stole from heav'n a prayer,
And likewise stole my heart."

You note the peculiar charm of the thing — every one involved is unmarried, and there is not a little excitement in the guessing. Can you not see the Young Ladies of Durham poring over the list, and their delight on finding their own names, and their dismay at being left out? And the beauties of the Isle of Wight — even worse to be left out of that galaxy!

And now let us see how it was done. Here is a good example: —

"AN ENIGMATICAL LIST OF YOUNG LADIES OF MALDON, ESSEX

"1. The wife of an ancient patriarch and a sweet flower.

"2. Three-sevenths of a title, one-third of a term of affirmation, and four-ninths of the distance from east to west.

"3. A Queen of England and a fish, changing a vowel.

"4. The Christian name of an unfortunate concubine, two-fifths of an ancient British priest, two-fifths of a month, and two-fifths of a mistake.

"5. A female Sovereign, three-sevenths of the High Priest of Rome, and one-sixth of a short sword.

"6. Three-fifths of to make void, three-sixths of a man's Christian name, two-thirds of solid water, and one-fourth of a salute.

"7. The mother of a prophet, a heap of corn,

two-sixths of a pointed weapon, and one-fourth of the smallest quantity of any liquor.

"8. Three-sixths of a well-known fish, two-fourths of a musical instrument, and a large and small stream.

"9. The mother and daughter of a King, two-eighths of a northern constellation, the sharp part of an instrument, and one-third of an animal."

I must confess that many of these are too difficult for me; I don't hold with such an atomic theory in puzzles. But there are doubtless readers with the special acrostic gift to whom these problems will present little or no difficulty. However, here is the official solution, printed two or three months later: —

"1. Sarah May.
2. Mary Long.
3. Mary Hurring.
4. Jane Draper.
5. Elizabeth Pond.
6. Ann Edwick.
7. Hannah Rickard.
8. Sally Seabrook.
9. Mary Fledger."

How many of these belles of Maldon in 1788 have left any memory, one wonders? Where are the *neiges d'antan?* Such lists accentuate (if that is possible) one's already too profound sense of transitoriness.

X. — A Phrase

From far Japan comes this little *Guide on Hakone*, written in English as well as he can by C. J. Tsuchiya, and one of its phrases is so admirable that it should be put on record for inferior English scholars to imitate. Hakone, it should be premised, is a village of thermal springs situate on the top of Hakone Mountain. The mountain was once a volcano, "but lately its activity became quite absent." The natural disposition of the villagers of Hakone is "gentle and honest," and "their mutual friendship is so harmonious as that of a family." The village is famous for its fresh air; "during the winter days the coldness robs up all pleasures from our hands, but at the summer months they are set free."

But now for the shining phrase. Hakone was the scene, thirty-odd years ago, of a decisive battle which gave feudalism its death-blow. The two contestants were the Lord of Odawara-Han, of the Imperial Army, and the Lord of Bōshū, who stood for feudalism. For a while the Lord Bōshū conquered, and he drove the enemy to the castle of Odawara, where they made themselves secure. He then advanced upon them, feeling certain of victory. But he had calculated badly, or, in Mr. C. J. Tsuchiya's delightful words, "he missed unexpectedly his cogitation," with the result that the foe rushed out suddenly and defeated him.

Let us all take example from the Lord of Bōshū and endeavour, when we have a cogitation, to hit the truth with it.

XI. — Saturninity

Collections of funny stories are depressing things, but there is a little more to be said for them when they illustrate a nation's humour. Hence when I was asked fourpence the other day for *The Amusing Instructor, being a Collection of Fine Sayings, Smart Repartees, &c., from the most approved Italian Authors, with an English Translation* (London, 1727), I decided to make the plunge, especially as I had just read in a review a sentence from Mr. Justin Huntly McCarthy's novel *The O'Flynn* to the effect that "economise" was a dirty verb to use to a gentleman.

According to the Preface, the book was designed for the use of those desirous of learning the Italian, the ordinary study of language being "very dry and unpleasant." For how, the compiler inquires, in effect, can anyone be bored who learns a new tongue from waggish anecdotes? Well, that was before the days when railway reading had to be invented; he would not adopt such a method or such confidence now. Some of his stories, however, are not bad;

and the best have a certain family resemblance, an agreeable saturninity being at the bottom of them. I string together a few examples: —

"*The True Method for Recollecting One's Past Sins.* — A man confessing himself to a priest, among other sins of which he own'd himself guilty, said, that he had beat his wife a few hours before. The father confessor asking him the occasion of it, he reply'd, that 'twas his usual custom, because his memory was so very weak, that he cou'd not remember the sins he had committed; but whenever he had drubb'd his wife, she reproach'd him with all the ill he had done in his life, and that thereby he was enabled with very little trouble to make a general confession."

That is very typical of the humour of the old story-tellers. It has two certain elements of success in it — a wife in her right place, and blows.

We find the wife again in the next; but it has an unexpected turn: —

"A Man at Messina was accus'd for marrying five wives, when, being carried before the judge, he was ask'd, why he had married so many; he answer'd, in order to meet with one good one if possible, and afterwards keep to her. Oh! says the judge, if you cannot meet with a good one in this world, get you gone into the next and look for one there; upon which he order'd him to be put to death."

The next example introduces avarice, which was

also a very favourite topic with humorists, but seems now to have gone out. At least, one rarely meets the miser in modern fiction, but then neither does one meet anyone else with marked characteristics. They are having a close time. The pendulum, however, will swing back some day, preoccupation with the Seventh Commandment will cease, and the misers and other picturesque oddities will return. Here is the story: —

"A Roman knight was found after his death to owe above five hundred thousand ducats, which circumstance he, when alive, had very industriously conceal'd. When they afterwards came to sell his possessions, and among other things his furniture, Augustus Cæsar gave orders that they shou'd purchase his blankets for himself, saying, that he wou'd use them, in order to make him sleep, since he who had been so much in debt, had been able to sleep under them."

The following story also follows familiar lines, but is very well done here: —

"A man who was at the point of death left orders by his Will to his only son, that he should sell three faulcons of great value; ordering by the same, that by the sale of one he should pay his debts; that the money arising from the sale of the other should be employed for the good of his soul; and that the third should be sold for his own

advantage. His father dying a few days after, one of the faulcons flew away, which he could not catch again, upon which he cry'd out; that goes for my father's soul."

Even better I like this, which contains an extraordinary amount of philosophy to the square inch: —

"Trespade Mantuano fearing a threshing about from one of his enemies, stood upon his guard for upwards of a twelve-month; but happening to be watch'd one evening, his shoulders were handsomely drubb'd; at which he, far from discovering the least discontent, but, as if he had been eas'd of some burthen, crys out, thank heavens, that I have got rid of this ugly affair."

There has been nothing quite English in anything I have quoted yet, but we find the cynical humour of the London streets in the following, which again introduces the wife, this time a Xantippe. All nations (and Londoners are a separate nation) probably join hands in such sarcasms: —

"A Perugian was bewailing himself, and crying bitterly, because his wife had hang'd herself on one of his fig-trees. Upon which a friend of his drawing near him, whispers him in the ear, 'How is it possible, my friend, that you can find tears to weep in so much prosperity? Pray give me a slip of that fig-tree, because I have a mind to plant it in my garden, to see what my wife will do.' "

But the next, the most tremendous cynicism of all, is unique. That is beyond London completely; nor do I know of anything of the kind among French *ana*. If it is like anything, it is like some grim Hindoo jest: —

"A Vine-dresser or husband-man, going to his master, told him the news of his wife's being brought to bed; and what has she got, replies the master, a girl I warrant you? Better, Sir, replies the husband-man. Has she a boy then? continues the master. Better still, replies the husband-man, for she's brought to bed of a dead female child."

The Worst Prelude to Adventure

LONDON is never so exciting as on May nights. The other evening I was forced into attending a debate: a thing I had not done for years. Never mind what the subject was, but one speaker after another got up — a few in reply to the last speaker, but most merely to deliver some remarks prepared even earlier (if possible) than the last speaker had prepared his. And so it went on, and then there was a show of hands, something was carried, something was lost; and I found myself under the May stars with the sweetness of the May night all about me.

It was not very late; I was in no hurry to go to bed; and the evening's rhetoric, so futile, when all is said, because only academic and leading no whither, had aroused in me a mood of revolt. To think that we should have been sitting there arguing in a stuffy room, when we might have been high on Hampstead Heath; or in the garden of the Spaniards; or smelling the lilacs of Holland Walk; or, at ease, on the crazy green balcony of the Angel at Rotherhithe,

watching the river lights and the stealthy nocturnal shipping. Or we might have been merely in London's streets under the May stars.

It infuriated me. "I have lost an evening," I said, "and a May evening at that; and life is so devilish short." And so saying I pulled myself together and added, "But no matter — here you are, with a latchkey and an open mind: have an adventure!"

It was then about a quarter-past eleven. At one o'clock I was nearing home, weary and disheartened, asking myself the question, "Who are the people who have adventures?" and answering it, "Those who cannot appreciate them." And then I asked, "How is it that I, spoiling for an adventure, have had none?" and the answer was, "For two reasons — one, your attitude of receptivity: it is the unexpected that happens; and, two, only an ass would ever expect an adventure." And then I asked, "This being so, why on earth did I ever prepare the way for an adventure at all? Why didn't I know that they didn't occur?" And the answer was, "Books."

The answer was, "Books."

It is books that do the mischief. Without books we should know life for the humdrum thing and imposture it is, even in London on a May night. And even as it is, we know it; but books make us forget what we know. Books are in our blood. No one who begins bookishly ever becomes quite free again. There they are, all the time, in the back-

ground, dominating conduct and providing standards, ideals, limitations, but above all illusions and disappointments. For the books that one reads in the impressionable years, and therefore absorbs and remembers, are always so much better and more exciting than life.

Ballantyne, for example, who came first — what chances his boys had that were never ours! Coral islands to be cast away upon; fur-trading; gorilla-hunting — you see the mischief of it all! Then Haggard, Stevenson, Defoe, Scott, Dickens. These are the corrupters of youth. One comes away from them for ever expecting something, where one might, without them, have been merely acquiescent and at peace. For they all heighten; they all arrange life their own way and sauce it. Dickens comes nearest to the life that one knows: one continually meets characters with a vague Dickensian flavour; but the breath of genius is not in them. They are the shells only: the great, comic, humane, living, unreal fairy-land spirit has not animated them. It never can: it began with Dickens and passed with him. Disappointment again!

But on my way home that night it was Stevenson whom I felt to be the first of the traitors: Stevenson, who brought Bagdad to London (the low trick!), and, since Bagdad is not really London, spoiled life for thousands of us. How often have I invented New Arabian Nights for myself! I suppose all that ever tasted that seductive poison have done so.

The taxi chauffeur who invites one to ride free to the mysterious house. The anonymous, agonized gentleman who stops me in the street imploring me to witness his will or perform some other service, to be followed not long after by the receipt of the lawyer's letter (always a lawyer's letter!) that carries the news of fortune. The note dropped from the barred upper window behind which the beautiful girl is incarcerated. The veiled lady with the blood-hound. . . .

On a May night of stars in London how one can play with, elaborate, and perfect such *motifs*. In the adventure of the agonized gentleman who requires a signature, for example, he stands at the gate in the small hours, counting the infrequent passers-by, his object being to invite the seventh. Perhaps it is not himself for whom he is acting, but for some strange sinister employer, bed-ridden, at death's door, upstairs. An old woman, maybe, masterful, cunning, but helpless, who cannot spare this factotum, but must have a life-and-death message carried at once. It is I who carry it. Perhaps it is written; perhaps it is verbal; curious cryptic words which, when I say them to the person they are intended for, cause him to blanch and quail. Every one has these dreams of romantic interludes in the drab monotony of city-life; but they come to nothing. Adventures, such as they are, fall only to those who have forgotten the story-writers or never knew them.

As to how similar the ideas of exceedingly dissimilar persons can be, even when they are deliberately fantastic, I have an instance only too pat. It has long been a favourite whim of mine that a mirror should be invented capable of retaining every reflection it had ever recorded and giving them back when desired. A little while ago I picked up *Passages from the American Note-Books* of Nathaniel Hawthorne, and found the same idea jotted down for use one day in a romance. This book, by the way, is a mine of suggestions for the story-writers, for Hawthorne had more thoughts in a day than he could use in a year; and many of them are here.

And so, turning the key, I bade farewell to the May stars, and did one of the most adventurous things left to us — I went to bed. For no one can lay a hand on our dreams. All the authors of the world cannot spoil those.

Note

THE essays that make up this book have for the most part already appeared in various periodicals — chiefly in *Punch*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and the *Guardian*. But few of them are printed here exactly as they were written, and several have many changes.

E. V. L.

THE following pages contain advertisements of Macmillan books by the same author

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